



THE INDEPENDENT

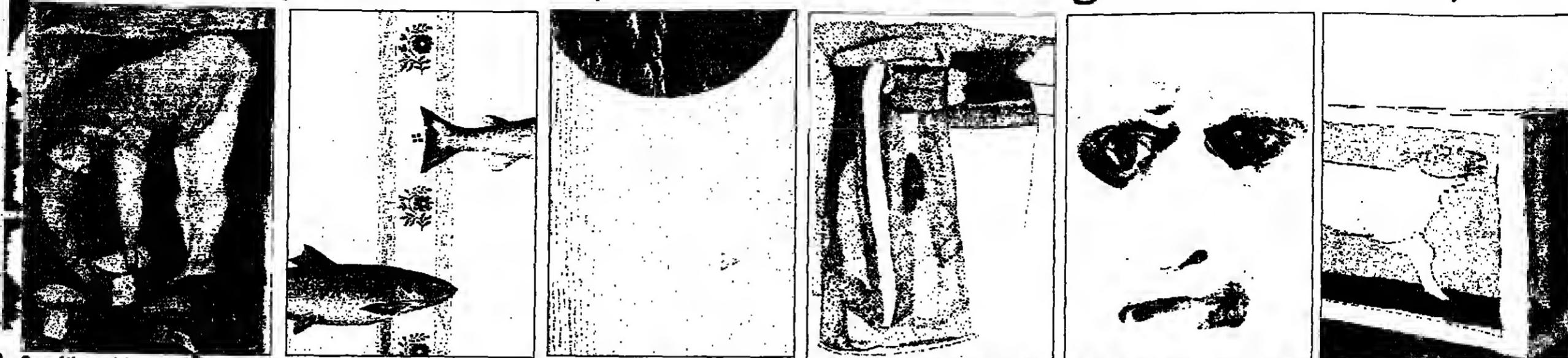
No 3,160

THURSDAY 5 DECEMBER 1996

WEATHER: Dry and bright

40p (IR 45p)

£30 for a postcard? Yes, but one of these might be worth £4,000



One of these pictures could be by Edward Paolozzi, another could be by Frank Auerbach, and for just £30, prospective purchasers can lay claim to a minor masterpiece worth up

to £4,000. But there's a catch. Choose wrongly, and the buyer will merely be patronising a talented art student. The exhibition, "Absolut Secret", at the Royal College of Art until Sunday features 1,600 examples of postcard art, half of which are by well-known artists. Visitors can register their purchase but only on Sunday will they be allowed to

know the artist. For those who think they know their art, a warning: many of the artists have camouflaged their work - but all will be revealed in Monday's *Independent*.

Major faces mutiny by ministers

John Rentoul
and Anthony Bevins

John Major is facing ministerial mutiny over the European single currency at the start of the general election campaign with frontbenchers threatening to defy government policy in election addresses to local voters.

It would risk derailing the Conservative campaign by directing media attention to the Tories' most divisive weak spot - Europe - and such an open breach of collective ministerial responsibility would prompt demands for ministerial rebels to be sacked.

A senior government source said last night that rifts over Europe were more damaging than the closer they broke to an election. In an election campaign itself, they would be "seriously troublesome."

He said that while aberrant behaviour could be expected from some "green" candidates, disciplinary action would have to be taken against ministers who issued electoral addresses that flew in the face of the national party manifesto and damage party credibility.

Unlike MPs who automatically lose their jobs once Parliament is dissolved for an election, ministers stay in office until a new Government takes over and could risk instant dismissal for a breach of collective ministerial responsibility. Labour would demand nothing less.

It has been estimated that as many as two-thirds of Tory candidates could locally dissociate

themselves from the national manifesto line; that no decision can be made on sterling entry into the single currency until firm terms have been agreed, after the election.

Tory sceptics want the Prime Minister to stand on a platform defending the pound, and despair that this week he deepened his commitment to the wait-and-see line.

But senior Conservatives believe the tensions of the election campaign will sap the rigid, wait-and-see agreement that was forced on Mr Major by Michael Heseltine and Kenneth Clarke on Tuesday.

A parallel is being drawn between the current Tory truce and the 1983 Labour deal on nuclear disarmament which so effectively destroyed the credibility of Michael Foot's first and last election campaign as Labour leader.

In that campaign, deputy leader Denis Healey and former prime minister, James Callaghan undermined the manifesto commitment to a "non-nuclear defence policy" every time they reiterated their views.

The Conservative Euro-sceptics believe that a number of Cabinet Ministers will be tempted, during the election campaign, to cast doubt on British participation in the first wave of the single currency. By delivering coded challenges to the wait-and-see policy enshrined in the Tory manifesto, they would attract headlines while avoiding disciplinary action.

The names of Michael

Howard, the Home Secretary, and Defence Secretary Michael Portillo are being nominated as the most likely ministers to step over that line.

Every time that happens, the party will look less and less credible. The Westminster suspicion is that once Mr Major loses that essential credibility, and risks losing to Labour, the gloves will come off for the Tory leadership contest that is certain to follow election defeat.

In that event, it is said by senior Tories, it will be everyone for themselves as the potential contenders make their individual pitches to a Conservative parliamentary party that is expected to be much more right-wing and Euro-sceptic than it has been since 1979.

That deadly political scenario was being painted in the aftermath of Tuesday's Commons statement by Mr Major, which was itself greeted with bitterness by some of the more emotional Euro-sceptics.

But the Tories' pro-Europeans are equally determined to resist further attempts to reopen the policy. The Positive European Group of Conservative MPs has brought forward its weekly meeting from Monday of next week, to tonight, and according to senior officials, it will be discussing how to consolidate the Prime Minister's acceptance that existing policy will not be changed this side of an election. One source said: "The first step, really, is to make sure there is no further back-sliding."

Leading article, page 17



The devastation of child abuse can last a lifetime. Photograph: Posed by models © NSPCC

Independent Christmas Appeal

Help us to help victims of abuse

At the end of a year in which

The Independent disclosed some of the worst child-abuse scandals ever revealed, today we launch our Victims of Abuse appeal to help children whose lives have been devastated by abuse.

Our Christmas appeal is in support of projects run by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, including its helpline and direct support to help children who have been abused and to prevent abuse.

The terrible toll of years of abuse suffered by more than 100 children in Chwyd was first reported by *The Independent* and was the launchpad for a campaign which eventually won government action to tighten standards in children's homes.

Recent child-abuse scandals in residential homes form a grim litany - Cleveland, Frank Beck in Leicestershire, pindown in Staffordshire, Bryn Estyn in Clywd, Ty'r Felin, in Bangor, Gwynedd - and these children had been taken into care because it was thought that they would be safer. In the community, we heard of cases such as Daniel Handley who was abducted, abused and murdered by two paedophiles, and Rikki Neave, whose mother was sentenced to seven years for crimi-

city. Countless other stories have never been heard.

The NSPCC runs more than 120 projects offering counselling and therapy to abused children, as well as carrying out its own investigations into allegations of abuse. The charity relies on public donations for 85 per cent of its income. We would like you to contribute between now and Christmas. Your money will go to help projects such as the NSPCC's 24-hour freephone helpline, which takes on average 1,200 calls a week, the London Investigation Team, which works with the police and social services to investigate paedophiles, and the Kaleidoscope project in Newcastle, which treats children who have abused other children.

Over the next few weeks we will be telling you more about the projects, starting today with a day in the life of workers on the NSPCC helpline. A coupon for making your donation accompany that article.

Victims of Abuse appeal, page 10



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Butcher told of poison risk

Steve Boggan

The award-winning butcher at the centre of Britain's worst food poisoning epidemic sold suspect meat after twice being told by health officials to withdraw it.

As the epidemic claimed its seventh victim, it emerged that John Barr had promised officials from North Lanarkshire Council that he would sell no cooked meats after they identified his shop in Wishaw as a possible source of the outbreak. But, less than two hours later, he supplied turkey, ham and roast beef for an 18th birthday party at which several people appear to have been poisoned.

The family who threw the party said yesterday that they were considering legal action.

Mr Barr, this year's Scottish Butcher of the Year, was not available for comment yesterday, but a spokesman for the Environmental Services Department of the North La-

narkshire Council said its officials had contacted him on Friday 22 November when they realised there was an outbreak of E. coli poisoning.

"At 6.30pm, we told Mr Barr that his shop was the possible source of the outbreak and we asked him not to sell any cooked meats for the time being. He agreed not to," said the spokesman. "The following day, at 7.30am, our officers visited his shop to conduct tests and again asked that he not sell any cooked meat. Again, he agreed."

However, at 9am, a relative of the MacFarlanes visited the shop and collected cooked meats for the party. Through their solicitor, Paul Santoni, the MacFarlanes expressed anger and concern that their guess had been put at risk. He said:

"The thing that is causing me most anxiety, are the reports which we are getting from the local authority that the meat was supplied for the function ... by the butcher the day after he agreed to cease the sale of cooked meat. I look forward to receiving an explanation for that. Also there is concern that there might have been further meats supplied on or after Saturday 23 November."

The local authority said it would be inappropriate to comment on that suggestion. Mr Barr's solicitor, George Moore, said he was "surprised" that the health board had given out details of meat supplies when the matter was under investigation.

The seventh victim, a 74-year-old man, died at Monklands hospital yesterday morning.

Education+
24-page pull-out packed with higher education appointments



Essay
Sexy but wrong
page 18

QUICKLY	
Bank jobs go	NatWest announced that it is to shut 300 branches and cut a third of its workforce - 11,000 jobs - as the Banking Ombudsman reported registered complaints against banks rose by 8 per cent. Pages 3 and 20
Palestinian death	Amnesty said the death of Rashid Fityani, 26, a Palestinian prisoner killed by a guard, confirmed the reputation of Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority for ill-treating inmates. Page 15
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news

significant shorts

Paris talks over Guernsey fishing rights

Talks are to take place in Paris tomorrow to resolve the fishing rights dispute between Guernsey and France.

Representatives from Guernsey, Britain and France will try to solve the dispute, which came to a head on Monday, when 10 French trawlers invaded the Sark Box, a lucrative fishing area south of Guernsey in defiance of a ban imposed by the island's authorities.

A Home Office spokesman said last night that a Royal Navy fishery protection vessel had taken up station in Sea Isle waters. *Philip Jeune*

£30,000 fine for human fireball accident

A Derby smelting company, Bernhard Metals (UK), was fined £30,000 and ordered to pay £20,000 costs yesterday after a furnace man died in an horrific accident.

Labour's Anthony Jackson, 32, became a human fireball after molten metal set his clothes alight. He died in hospital 12 days later.

Mr Justice Hilden said at Nottingham Crown Court: "The lack of thought by this company towards its employees beggars belief."

Peace process explanation

The Northern Ireland minister, Michael Ancram, arrived in Brussels yesterday to explain Government conditions for Sinn Fein's admission to peace talks. Mr Ancram said he wanted to "iron out misconceptions" in Europe about these demands or about the peace process in general. *Katherine Butler*

Extradition for Mafia daughter

The daughter of a convicted Mafia leader yesterday lost her High Court battle against extradition to Italy where she is wanted on drug-trafficking charges. Maria Merito, 26, will have to return to Italy within two months. If found guilty, she could face 15 years in prison. *Charlie Bain*

Coma mother dies in hospital

A woman who gave birth in a coma following a car crash has died in hospital. Karen Battenborough, 25, died at Clydach Hospital in Swansea, having spent 22 months unconscious. Her kidneys failed after pneumonia set in.

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

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Labour's bad gang seeks safer targets



The large audience made the ministerial fog bank even more painfully dense than ever

Yesterday Labour MPs voted by nearly three to one for new rules to govern their behaviour, including the catch-all charge of "bringing the party into disrepute". In soccer this phrase covers a number of the more interesting sins, encompassing abusing fellow team members as well as pulling down your shorts and revealing your bottom to the crowd.

Unable to go about their usual business of sitting around complaining about Brown and Blair, they left the meeting and barreled into the Chamber looking for someone else to abuse.

And found - to their boisterous delight - the Government's charismatically challenged trade and industry team sitting in a row on the front bench, just asking to be duffed up.

To describe the fifty-something group of Messrs Lang, Taylor 1, Taylor 2, Page and Knight as "grey" is to deprive that hue of colours, textures, shades, miances and moods which often go overlooked. A bar full of retired assistant bank managers discussing with profits amanuenses at a joint golf club and Rotarians fund-raiser, holds out more prospect of hilariously fun.

So the naughty boys' bunch (where Dennis Skinner always sits) had eight, rather than the usual two occupants. The heckler's area (at the back, beyond the gangway) was also well populated, with George Foulkes and Tony Banks engaged in a personal competition to see who could get the best one-liners and abusive names inserted at delicate points in Tory MPs' questions or ministers' replies.

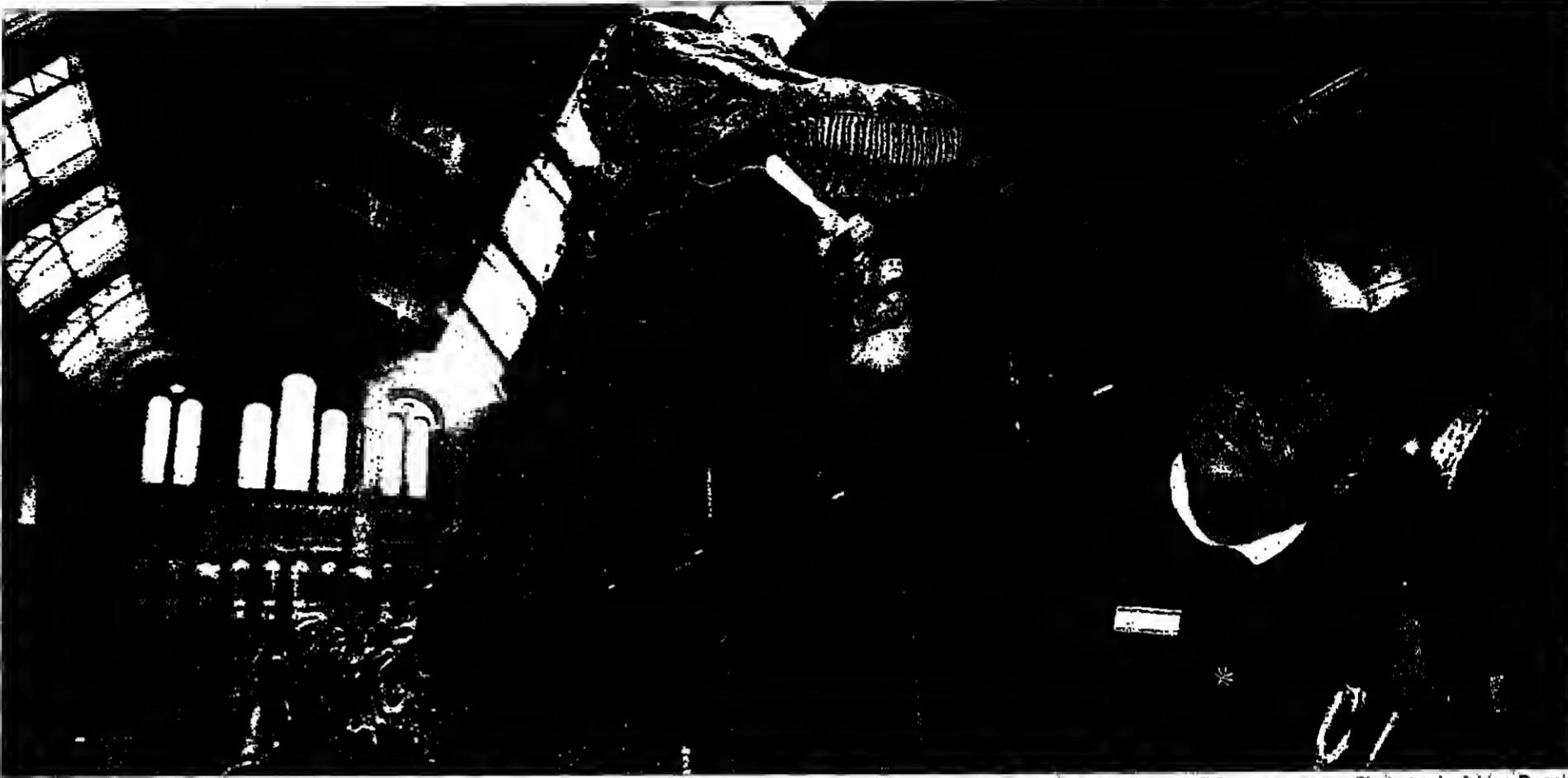
The effect on the ministerial fog bank of this unexpected success then! roared the naughty boys. Mr Page made the best of a bad job. Mr Hughes "did not quite grasp the principle of deregulation", he floundered, explaining that "we live in an increasingly complex world". Most of these regulations were measures for consumer protection. Did the Opposition not "want to remove carcinogens from babies' dumplings?" he asked, desperately updating one of politics' oldest accusations.

Few were enjoying this more than Tony Banks. No Conservative was safe from an intervention from the member for Newham North West and (if gulls are to be believed) destined to become the first elected Mayor of London. Charles Goodson-Wickes (Wimbledon) was opposed to the 48-hour di-

rective; "vicious mill-owner!" retorted Tony. The Ofcom regulator was opposed to Labour's windfall tax, said another Conservative. "Tory stooge!" came the cry.

But who did he remind me of? Then I twigged. Tony Banks is metamorphosing into Captain Haddock, the permanently (and comically) enraged sidekick of Tintin the boy detective, whose stock-in-trade was a collection of colourful terms of abuse such as "Coelacanth!", "basil-bazooka!", "vegetarianism" and of course, "billions of blue blistering barnacles!"

The blue barnacles affixed to the government benches may not appreciate the new Haddock, but Tone-tone, the boy leader, certainly will. So as long as loyal Banksy keeps his shorts on, he will prosper, even under the new disciplinary code.



Skeleton staff: Solomon Carty cleaning the replica diplodocus at the Natural History Museum in London. The dinosaurs lived 150 million years ago. Photograph: Adrian Dennis

Gummer pledges on genetic maize

Ian Burrell

Labour has called on Ian Lang, the president of the Board of Trade, to take "immediate steps" to stop genetically-altered American corn being allowed to enter the British food chain.

The *Independent* revealed yesterday that ministers had been warned that the American corn was on its way and that it posed a risk to health.

Nigel Griffiths MP, Labour's spokesman on consumer affairs, will raise the matter in parliament by calling for a new government inquiry into the dangers of the American corn.

"The maize will be imported shortly despite the fact that it is not authorised in an unprocessed form and that the UK objected to proposals to authorise it," he adds. "There is bound to be concern that [the maize] represents a risk to human health and safety or to the environment."

The genetically-altered product (GM Maize) has already been mixed with normal corn for export by American growers. British officials admit they cannot tell the difference once the two are mixed.

The memo warned that the GM Maize was expected to arrive in Britain early this month.

It states: "A selective ban on imports from the USA would remove an important source of raw material from the food and feed processing industry in the UK and raise trade questions."

Mr Gummer said: "It is true that the Americans are trying to force this on to Europe without us making our own minds up about it."

"One of the important reasons for the EU is that we are strong enough to say to the Americans that we decide what

we want in our food chain and not you."

Yesterday, *The Independent* revealed details of a memorandum to Mr Gummer written by Dr William Parish, of the DoE's Chemicals and Biotechnology Division, which warned:

"[The maize] will be imported shortly despite the fact that it is not authorised in an unprocessed form and that the UK objected to proposals to authorise it."

"He adds: "There is bound to be concern that [the maize] represents a risk to human health and safety or to the environment."

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"It is too late for those users awaiting supplies of the US maize to secure other lines of supply at this stage."

Boxes everywhere, page 9

Not the Elephant Man after all

Joseph Merrick, the 19th century Englishman known as the Elephant Man because of his grotesque appearance, did not suffer from the disease that is named after him, it was claimed yesterday.

Radiologists in London say X-ray and CT scans of Merrick's remains suggest that he did not have neurofibromatosis, the disfiguring condition sometimes called Elephant Man disease.

According to the experts

Glenda Cooper

Stocks of blood have fallen so low in London and the South East that there is only just over half a day's supply left, the National Blood Service warned yesterday.

It is restricting blood orders to hospitals to the minimum possible and warns that the next move could be to cancel all operations except emergencies.

Donations in London have dropped by between 10 and 20 per cent which has coincided with a run on blood following the recent cold snap.

Christmas and New Year is

traditionally one of the most difficult periods of the year for the blood transfusion service, where stocks can fall by as much as 30 per cent. But Peter Gibson, head of communications of the London and South East zone said that it was "unusual" that they were experiencing problems two to three weeks before the Christmas period.

It is very low going into the Christmas period," said Mr Gibson. "All it needs is a serious incident and we will be under a great deal of pressure and we cannot rely on other parts of the country to help us out."

The London and South East

service launches its Christmas appeal today. Every day 10,000 units of blood a day are needed to supply hospitals but at present only 6 per cent of the population donate blood.

Nationally, figures are slightly down with the National Blood Authority holding 13,500 units yesterday instead of 15,000 but a spokesman said there was no question of a national crisis.

In Scotland blood supplies are also running desperately low as hospitals battle to cope with the E. coli 0157 outbreak, the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service (SNBTS) said yesterday. At the launch of

Only half a day's supply of blood left in South

Ian Burrell

A newsagent has been fined £100 for selling National Lottery tickets to a child in the first prosecution of its kind, just as Oftel, the lottery watchdog, ordered a crackdown on underage gambling.

Undercover children are to be recruited to trap shopkeepers who sell tickets and scratch cards to under-16s and retailers will be required to display a hot-line number which people can call if they witness under-age sales.

Oftel's director general, Peter Davis, described the existence of habitual young participants in the lottery as "disturbing".

He said: "That these children also tend to be involved with alcohol, tobacco, drugs and fruit

machines, reinforces my determination to stamp out illegal and irresponsible behaviour by some traders."

Yesterday a court in Leeds heard how two investigators from Camelot accompanied a 13-year-old girl into a newsagent's where she was sold an Aces High Instant ticket and a National Lottery draw ticket. Nelson Basing, the shopkeeper admitted selling the tickets but claimed he thought the girl was old enough to buy them.

Mary O'Shea, prosecuting for West Yorkshire Trading Standards, told Leeds Magistrates' Court that the police and then Camelot were tipped off by the girl's stepfather after she bought a ticket from N & N Newsagents, in Armley, Leeds, in March this year. She said:

"The girl was not asked her age even though in the investigation view she does not look older than her 13 years."

"Although he was of previously good character this case is a salutary lesson that one can never be too careful. This is not a bad man, but unfortunately he has fallen foul of the situation."

Fining Basing £250 for each of two offences of selling lottery tickets to a person under 16, with £25 costs, the chairman of the bench, Dr B Chaney, warned him that retailers had "an absolute obligation" to take care not to sell tickets to under-age customers.

The Oftel warning followed new research which showed that 3 per cent of children were becoming persistent users of scratchcards.

John Hurt in the hit film *The Elephant Man*, died in 1890 at the London Hospital, where he lived for four years after being rescued from a life as a circus freak by the doctor Frederick Treves. His remains were kept at the hospital, now renamed the Royal London Hospital.

The magazine *New Scientist* reported: "Sharma says that his skeleton shows the tell-tale signs of Proteus syndrome and lacks the characteristics that would be expected of someone

with neurofibromatosis. Merrick's skeleton is studded with bony outgrowths, predominantly on the right-hand side. His ring finger and femur are both enlarged, and his skull has a circumference of 91cm, compared to the 60cm typical for a man of his height."

Merrick's spine was also not sharply curved, as would be expected in a case of neurofibromatosis, and his ribs lacked notches common in the condition.

John Hurt as Merrick in *The Elephant Man* film

Carey pleads for the family

Andrew Brown
Religious Affairs Correspondent

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, yesterday called in Rome for Catholics and Anglicans to fight together for family values.

"Both our traditions place great emphasis on the family and family life. Anglicans can stay with Pope John Paul II that 'The future of the world and of the church passes through the family'."

Dr Carey quoted several major Catholic documents in support of his argument for the importance of family life, delivered during a lecture at the Anglican Centre in Rome. Though he has publicly disagreed with Pope John Paul II on contraception and the role of women in the church, the importance of family life to both church and society is a theme the two leaders agree on.

"The churches are ideally placed to make an enormous contribution to underpinning good parenting and faithful loving relationships. The family is a paradigm of the Kingdom of God."

Today he meets the Pope for substantive discussions. He also celebrates a eucharist in the chapel of the English College in Rome, training place for Catholic priests.

In this week's Radio Times, Andrew Duncan reveals the personality behind the glasses of the Australian megastar and discovers some unusual findings.

RadioTimes
IT'S NOT WHAT YOU EXPECT.

جامعة لندن

Man with machete 'planned a Dunblane'

A man's machete attack on infants having a teddy bears' picnic had "copy-cat" elements in common with Thomas Hamilton's murders at Dunblane, a court heard yesterday.

Three children, aged between three and four, and four adults were injured in Horrett Campbell's rampage at St Luke's Church of England infants school in Blakenhall, Wolverhampton, on 8 July.

Campbell, 33, of Villiers House, a tower block overlooking the playground of the school, pleads not guilty to seven charges of attempted murder. He has admitted causing grievous bodily harm with intent and one charge of attempting to cause grievous bodily harm.

Richard Wakerley QC, for the prosecution, told Stafford Crown Court that police found two newspaper cuttings attached to the wall in his flat, one about Michael Bryant, who killed 35 people in Tasmania, and the other about Hamilton. His attack had other similarities with theirs.

Those injured by Campbell were Ahmed Malek, three, Rhea Chopra and Francesca Quintyne-Pearl, both four, Rhea's mother Surinder Chopra, Azra Rafiq, Wendy Willington, all 29, and Lisa Potts, 21, a teacher.

Mr Wakerley said a class of 20 children were in a grass area at the side of the school

having a teddy bears' picnic that afternoon.

Campbell left his flat carrying a light bag which held a machete, a large knife and a washing-up liquid bottle containing petrol. There were two bars with sponges attached which could be used, he said, as "a sort of fire bomb". He went up to Azra Rafiq and Surinder Kaur, and struck them on the head from behind. He then ran towards another mother, Wendy Willington, waiting with her young child. Mrs Willington threw herself on the ground, covering her child. Campbell struck her on the head, causing serious injuries. Miss Potts began shepherd-

ing the children into the school. Campbell went towards her, striking out at Ahmed Malik, leaving him with deep lacerations to the arm and to the head. His skull was fractured.

Campbell then struck out at Rhea Kaur-Chopra, daughter of Surinder, slicing her across the side of her face.

Miss Potts was still holding children inside. Mr Wakerley said to the jury: "You may well be astonished by the courage of that young girl as she could so easily have shut that door, gone further inside to find help, gone to her headmistress."

Mr Wakerley continued: "She then realised young children were still outside with this man waving the machete and she went out again. She completely, you may think, disregarded her own safety."

"But for her action this tragedy could have been so much worse. She went back outside the school as the children clung to her. She pushed some of them back inside and gathered others up in her arms."

But Campbell approached and struck her with his machete on her head, back and arms. Mr Wakerley added: "Notwithstanding that, she continued to drag the other little children back to school into the doorway and pulled it hard to close it."

The trial continues.

Campbell struck out at Francesca Quintyne with his machete. Her jaw was fractured and part of her ear cut off.

He returned to his flat, lighting two small fires in the tower block as a diversion. He remained hidden in the block until the next day, when he was arrested.

Mr Wakerley said the jury might decide he was mentally unbalanced during the attack.

He added: "But we suggest that the true question is not why he did it but in striking these people did he intend to kill them? If that intent was to kill, then it is attempted murder."

In police interviews Campbell described how he had thought about the attack for up to a month before.

Mr Wakerley added: "He thought that the school had turned against him because young children had jeered at him when he walked past."

Mr Wakerley added: "He told the police that he thought both Hamilton and Bryant had been misunderstood by society... They had been driven to do what they did, namely indiscriminately kill others, just as he had been driven to do what he did. There are elements of copy-cat here, are there not?"

The trial continues.

Albert Hall premiere with spots on



Dog's life: Reshooting Disney's cartoon classics with real people and animals could regenerate the entire back catalogue

David Lister
Arts News Editor

What do you do when everyone has seen the original movie? You release the film on video naturally, and if you're fun-loving Walt Disney you let it be known Cruella De Vil-style that you had better buy it quickly as it might be withdrawn at any moment.

And when all the times have been given their 101 Dalmatians video for Christmas? You release the film again, only this time with real people, and genuine canines.

Whoever had this profit-maximising idea should be rising rapidly up the Disney corporation.

The scope is endless. Sixty years of movies to re-shoot with Hollywood's finest and a forest of wannabe animals. Gwyneth Paltrow as Snow White, with Dennis De Vito leading the seven dwarfs? Genuine deer for Bambi, with a guest appearance from Prince William playing the hunter perhaps?

As if real stars and real dogs were not enough, Disney also announced that last night's premiere at the Royal Albert Hall, attended by Glenn Close, Jeff Daniels, Joey Richardson and the rest of the cast, was the first of their "Event Movies".

By the term Event, they meant that the Albert Hall was being used for a film premiere for the first time since 1927 and Charlie Chaplin's The Gold Rush - and not the fact that Mick Jagger and Jerry Hall attended together.

As part of "The Event", the 560m movie was followed by a themed party, held with no great thematic significance at the Royal Geographical Society, but with a catwalk show (catwalk perhaps not the perfect theme for the ultimate doggy movie) with models showing off dalmatian out-

fits designed by Vivienne Westwood, Katherine Hamnett et al.

The film has already broken box office records in America, or at least one uniquely American box-office record. It is the biggest Thanksgiving movie of all time, amassing \$46m over the five day holiday last month.

It may usher in a new era in Britain too. Seeing a movie at the Royal Albert Hall with its rows of private boxes showed that there could be a future in watching movies with a group of friends or contacts, drinking and eating all the while. The age of corporate cinema could be upon us.

Dalmatian facts and fiction

■ Over 200 dalmatians were used in the making of the live action film.

■ When born, the puppies do not appear to have spots at all; they are all white. The first spots are not obvious until 10 days old.

■ 6,469,952 black spots were drawn by Disney animators for the 1961 cartoon.

■ A dalmatian's skin is pink with bluish-black spots which correspond to its coat.

■ An adult will grow to 60lbs and 24 to 25 inches tall at the shoulder.

■ About one in ten suffers from deafness - a disability connected with their white coats.

■ Nicknames: English coach dog, firehouse dog, plum-pudding dog, and spotted dick.

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Demand at the dinner table leaves sharks in the soup

Nicholas Schoon
Environment Correspondent

The world's most feared predator, the shark, is increasingly endangered by mankind, says a report by wildlife investigators published today.

Catches are rising rapidly as the demand for the sharks' dorsal fins for soup, oil from their large livers, skin, cartilage and meat all grow, says the document from Traffic, the Cambridge-based wildlife trade monitoring organisation.

Yet there are no international agreements between countries setting limits on the catches, and the monitoring of the numbers caught is very poor. Traffic puts the figure at somewhere between 30 million and 70 million a year.

Most of the slaughter is accidental, with the predators caught up in nets put out for other fish. But shark's fin is regarded as a delicacy in some countries and trade has more than doubled in the 15 years up



to 1995. The fin trade centres on Hong Kong, where a bowl of shark's fin soup can cost up to £60, while the fins themselves sell for more than £300 a kilo. The colony also imports and exports them from and to dozens of countries.

Sharks can easily be over-exploited because they are not prolific breeders and grow slowly. This autumn, several shark species – there are nearly 400 in all – were added to the official Red List of threatened animals. These include the huge basking shark, a plankton feeder which swims close in

The hunter that became the hunted

Most classification systems divide fish into three classes: jawless, cartilaginous, and bony.

Sharks fall into the cartilaginous category, Class Chondrichthyes. There are nearly 400 species of shark distributed over tropical and temperate zones, particularly around New Zealand and South Africa, belonging to 19 separate families.

The great white shark is the largest predatory fish. It grows up to 15ft in length and weighs up to 1,700lb.

At least 1,000 people are killed annually by sharks. 70-80 per cent of them off the coast of Africa, South America and Asia. Waters around Australia are especially dangerous; since 1898 at least 420 people have died there after being attacked.

British Government to apply to have the basking shark listed under the Cites treaty, the international agreement which seeks to control or ban the trade in endangered wildlife.

Dozens of the huge, harmless fish, which can weigh several tonnes, arrive in the waters of the Irish Sea around the island in the summer, but local laws prevent them from being caught within the island's 12-mile limit. They are killed for the large quantities of oil in their liver.

The Government has not yet decided whether to apply for a Cites listing.

"There's a desperate need for basic information to assess the threat posed by the global trade," said Steven Broad, director of Traffic, which is part funded by the World Wide Fund for Nature. "What we do know is that the trade is vast... and most fisheries are unmanaged and unmonitored."



Taking the bait: The great white shark is now on the Red List of threatened species

Police raid home of gun-lobby campaigner

Jason Bennett
Crime Correspondent

Police have seized more than 200 weapons and 30,000 bullets from the home and business of one of Britain's leading pro-gun campaigners.

Richard Law, the outspoken secretary of the Shooters' Rights Association, which has been fighting to reverse a government Bill to ban most handguns, was arrested by investigating officers and later released on bail.

It emerged afterwards that Mr Law had his gun licence revoked by the Metropolitan Police in 1983 after he was caught carrying two revolvers at a market in London.

Mr Law yesterday accused the police of a "classic harassment" campaign aimed at disrupting his organisation's attempts to defeat the Firearms Bill currently going through Parliament.

Six police officers confiscated all Mr Law's weapons on Tuesday from his gun shop and home at Llanrhymeddwy Llynnwdrain in Dyfed Powys, west Wales. Weapons, including pistols, rifles, shotguns and swords, worth up to £100,000 were taken during the operation on his Home Office-approved firing range and dealership.

Among the guns were a collection for export to France. Under the Firearms Bill handguns must be sold to foreign dealers or destroyed by the police for compensation. There is concern that vast numbers of firearms held in Britain will be transferred to Europe and the US.

Police also revoked his gun and gun-dealing licence, and the shotgun and firearms certificates for his wife Elizabeth and shotgun certificate for his daughter Haleo. The police argue that the family are not fit and proper people to hold firearms licences. Mr Law will appeal against that decision in court.

A computer, files and licences relating to Mr Law's

work as a gun dealer and firearms expert witness were also taken, he said.

Mr Law, 44, whose wife planned at one point to stand as a gun-lobby candidate at Dunblane in the general election, said he had been served notice revoking licences for weapons in his armoury.

His premises were searched by 24 officers and he was arrested three hours later in connection with another incident before being bailed to return on 10 February to his local police station. The police had removed a number of firearms from his business about a month ago.

Mr Law said yesterday: "This looks to me like old fashioned harassment. There is a connection that this happened the day before the report stage of the Firearms Bill." He said he had licences for all of the weapons seized.

"They were looking for a way of closing us down. Which they have succeeded in doing. Without the tools of my trade I will be signing on the dole today."

He confirmed that he had his licence revoked while living in London and had been prosecuted in court, but argued it was a misunderstanding and an "occupational hazard".

The Shooters' Rights Association has led opposition to the Dunblane parents' calls for a complete handgun ban.

Ann Pearson of the Snowdrop Campaign, which wants to ban all firearms, welcomed the raid, and said: "It seems quite justified that he has had his licences revoked. I just hope he doesn't get them back on appeal."

A spokesman for Dyfed Powys police denied there was any campaign against Mr Law. A statement said: "As a result, a number of firearms and dealer-related certificates connected with the premises have been revoked and all weapons and ammunition at the premises have been removed by the police."

THE INDEPENDENT

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PARIS					
Prev. Train No.	New Train No.	Orig. Waterloo departure	New Waterloo departure	New Ashford departure	
9078	9078	05.08	05.50	06.53	
9002	9004	06.19	06.57	07.57	
9006	9008	07.23	07.53	08.53	
9010	9012	08.23	08.57	09.57	
9012	9012	08.53	08.57	09.57	
9018	9016	10.23	09.53	-	
9024	9024	11.57	11.57	12.57	
9028	9028	12.53	12.53	13.53	
9032	9032	13.57	13.57	-	
-	9036	-	14.57	-	
9038	9040	15.23	15.53	-	
9042	9044	16.23	16.48	17.57	
9046	9048	17.15	17.48	-	
9048	9048	17.48	17.48	-	
9052	9052	18.53	18.57	19.57	

BRUSSELS					
Prev. Train No.	New Train No.	Orig. Waterloo departure	New Waterloo departure	New Ashford departure	
9110	9110	06.53	06.53	07.53	
9116	9118	08.27	08.53	09.53	
9120	9186	09.27	09.57	10.57	
9124	9130	10.27	11.53	12.53	
9132	9142	12.27	14.53	-*	
9140	9142	14.23	14.53	-	
9152	9152	17.19	17.19	-	
9156	9158	18.27	18.53	19.54	

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news

Little boxes everywhere (even the cows look alike)

John Gummer
rails against the
monotonous
condition of a
too-neat Britain

Stephen Goodwin
Heritage Correspondent

The drift to uniformity in town and country epitomised by the housing estate home of Ford Mondeo man and fields of oilseed rape came under scathing attack yesterday at the launch of a new map charting the character of England.

John Gummer, Secretary of State for the Environment, railed against the orderly and the neat and said children were being left a "terrible legacy" by volume housebuilders.

"If you were taken blindfold to the centre of most recent private developments you would find it impossible to know whether you were in Carlisle or Chatham," Mr Gummer said. Any difference would not be due to a sense of place but "merely connected with the marketing strategy" of the builder.

More biting criticism came from Richard Wakeford, chief executive of the Countryside Commission, one of the two government agencies which combined to produce the map.

Decisions taken from the marketplace and the debating chamber were causing a "creeping and insidious trend towards uniformity", Mr Wakeford said.

"Modern, mass-produced housing – with just a touch of the vernacular if we are lucky – is a backdrop to



the Ford Mondeo parked outside, by the cypress leylandii hedge. Every high street seems to contain the same stores.

"In the countryside, the colours of cows now give us clues as to where

they are munching; the crops that are planted owe more to Brussels than to our regional differences in England. We are losing our diversity.

Lincoln Reds are almost a rare breed now in the fields of their na-

tive Lincolnshire. And other cattle with county associations, such as the Hereford, are going the same way.

The map, produced by the commission and English Nature at a cost of about £100,000 each, ignores

county boundaries and divides the country into 159 areas with a common wildlife, landscape, and to some extent, cultural characteristics.

Some areas, such as the South Downs, Fens or New Forest might

be thought to be readily identifiable without a map. But the agencies point to others such as the Southern Magnesian Limestone Ridge which might not. It runs north from Nottingham for about 100 miles yet is only eight miles wide.

It is typified by rolling hills cut through by river gorges, more woodland than surrounding areas, limestone villages and plants such as fly agaric and bluebells. The limestone is also a source of the clean water needed by the renowned regional breweries at Tadcaster and Masham.

Defending the map against doubts about its practical value, the agency heads maintained it would be an important tool in making better decisions about guiding landscape change and protecting wildlife. Both agencies began separate work on maps in 1991 but joined forces two years ago on realising the scope for confusion.

Mr Gummer insisted the map was "not a means of getting out of the proper protection of special places", and that statutory landscape and habitat designations would not be affected.

However, the map is likely to be used in formulating planning guidance – to help reinforce local identities and perhaps fire the "passionate sense of local loyalty" which Mr Gummer regretted the French did not share with the English.

Lessons for teachers on school security

Judith Judd
Education Editor

Teachers will be trained to deal with violent intruders, ministers promised yesterday.

Robin Squire, the schools minister, said that some of the £60m being allocated for security would be used specifically for the purpose. But personal safety advisers wanted that they should not be given lessons in self-defence.

Experts from the Suzy Lamplugh Trust, which is involved in a school security research project for the Government, said that training in self-defence could be worse than useless.

They were speaking outside a national conference on school security held almost exactly a year after the murder of the London headmaster, Philip Lawrence, which led to the establishment of a government working party on school security.

Tony Dickens, of the Suzy

Lamplugh Trust, said: "The message is about awareness and avoidance. It is not about self-defence."

"You can get hurt if you use self-defence. And then there is the question of what is 'reasonable' force which you are allowed to use to defend yourself."

Instead, he said, it was better to train teachers in how to defuse aggression. Schools in Cumbria, for instance, used the strategy of sending a child to deliver a book to the teacher in the next class if either a pupil or parent threatened violence.

That meant that help was summoned and everyone calmed down.

Teachers interviewing difficult parents should always do so in a room with a glass panel and ensure that someone came in regularly to check all was well. John Andrew, general secretary of the Professional Association of Teachers, agreed that teachers should not be surprised.



A farewell to oaks: the native tree that symbolises our supposed national virtues – strength, power and endurance – is under threat. Thomas Pakenham has photographed his favourite examples across Britain

Thirty years ago Ken Loach made a film about a Liverpool dock workers' strike. This year they are on strike again and he has been back to make another film. The differences between the two are a social history of our times



Party time for New York high society is not without its tiffs and tears: we tell the story of the Costume Institute Ball and the battle over who will be queen for the night

Plus: meet the lamp that thinks it's a chair in the home of the future

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news

The phone rings: it could be another beaten child or an abused daughter



Saving the children: The Child Protection Helpline deals with 57,000 calls a year and costs £1m to run. The pictures above were posed by models



Photographs: NSPCC

"Oh dear, yes, I have been busy..." "So you're saying the child has sleeping difficulties. Is that it?" "I appreciate you're at the end of your tether."

"How high was the cupboard?"

The crisis calls come thick and fast – more than 139,000 a year. "Mary" is one of a team of 32 telephone counsellors who answer as many of the calls as they can – 57,000 a year. That

leaves 82,000 cries for help unanswered.

A total of 7,621 of the 57,000 Child Protection Helpline calls answered last year were concerning child abuse, be it sexual, physical, emotional or neglect. The other 49,379 were about child care – from requests

for NSPCC information, requests for legal advice to reports of adult survivors of child abuse.

On average, the helpline – which costs £1m a year to run – refers between 100 and 120 cases each week to the social services, police and its own child protection teams and pro-

jects. The phone bill alone is £200,000.

Mary, 59, is a trained social worker who joined the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline six years ago.

To callers, she is just an anonymous voice. But Mary is also a human being with feel-

ings and emotions of her own. Spending all day listening to other people's concerns has left Mary reluctant to speak of her personal affairs. "I didn't know I thought all this till I said it out loud to you," she said, interrupting herself.

"I am human. So when I put the phone down, say after a 45-minute call, I can be quite moved by what the person said to me. I can't just pick the pieces up and deal with something else – I've no idea what it's going to be – so I gate the phone for a short time while I empty my head a bit."

She has been in the NSPCC headquarters, near Cannon Street tube station in London, since 9am. Whatever time of the day or night, on whatever day of the year, the scene is the same. It's a timeless zone, up and running 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The office is unglamorous. Six desks with six headsets, telephones and computers on them in a medium-sized room looking out on a grim, concrete car park. Rows of multi-coloured information files for different areas of the country line the far end of the room, above which is a large digital clock displaying both the date and the time.

In contrast to the predictable surroundings, no one knows what to expect when they pick up the phone.

"The phone rings and it could be someone saying: 'I hear this child next door crying all the time and a lot of banging. I don't want to get involved here's the address,'" said Mary.

"Or you could get a mother who has just found out that her daughter has been sexually abused by dad. I'm just holding her distress and, really before she has realised it, realising that there are going to be so many ripples from that allegation."

Mary listens, takes notes and provides the caller with the necessary information where she can. She never talks about herself to callers. "I'd never ever

say to anyone 'I had an accident and felt like that', or 'I've got daughters, I know what you mean', I don't think people want to know about me."

If a call comes through at 12.30pm, her 12.30 timetable is postponed. Sometimes it's hard to go back to work after the break.

Tears welled up in her eyes as she admitted: "If the callers have been particularly distressed in the morning there's a danger of thinking: 'Is everybody like this? Is there nothing light about this job?' Occasionally I might feel like that, but once I get back on the telephone, you start again."

After Mary logs off, she tries to rest her work. Sometimes that's hard. "We don't get much feedback. We often don't hear what happens," she said.

At other times it is easier. "When someone rings back, be it to say 'Yes, the child left on its own,' or 'Yes, the father's arrested,' she was sexually

"When I put the phone down, I can't just pick up the pieces and deal with something else"

"abused", it's only then you realise how valuable your intervention has been."

The Child Protection Helpline costs £1m a year to run. The phone bill alone is £200,000 a year. Please give generously.

If anyone has any concerns about the welfare of children then they can contact the national child protection helpline at any time. The freephone number is 0800 800 500.

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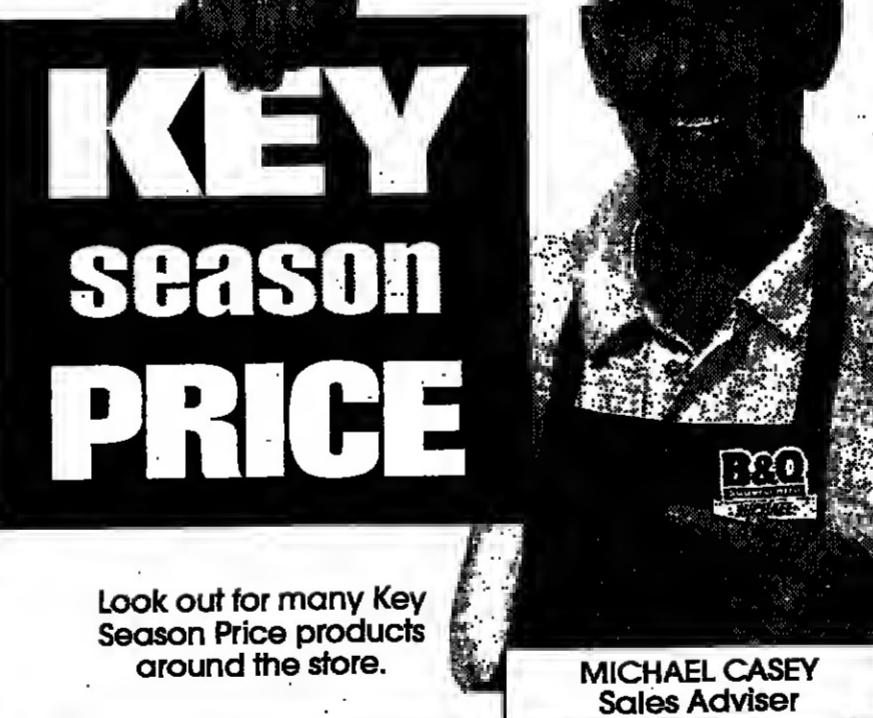
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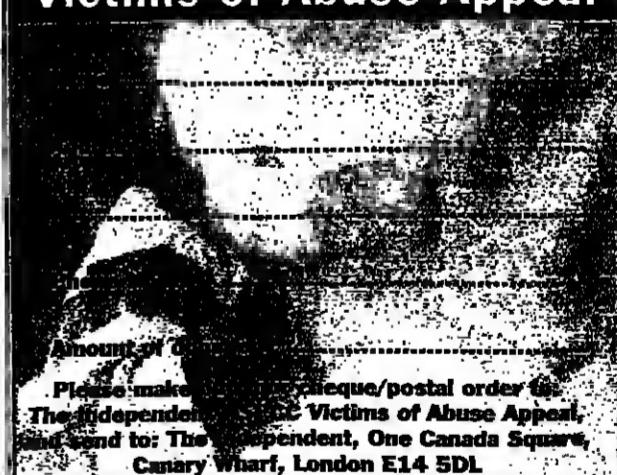
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THE INDEPENDENT/NSPCC Victims of Abuse Appeal



DAILY POEM

Monopoly

By Paul Farley

We sat like slum landlords around the board
buying each other out with fake banknotes,
until we lost more than we could afford
or ever hope to pay back. Now our seats
are empty – one by one we left the game
to play for real, at first completely lost
in that other world, its building sites, its rain;
but slowly learned the rules or made our own,
stayed out of jail and kept our noses clean.
And now there's only me – sole freeholder
of every empty office space in town,
and from the quayside I can count the cost
each low tide brings – the skeletons and rust
of boats, cars, hats, boots, iron, a terrier.

Paul Farley was born in Liverpool in 1963 and studied painting at the Chelsea School of Art. He has worked as a cinema usher, courier, scenic painter, spider wrangler and librarian, and began writing poetry after attending Michael Donaghy's City University Poetry Workshop. He won the Arvon/Obscure Poetry Competition in 1995 and this year was chosen by Poetry Review as one of their new poets of the year. Tonight he reads, with Tracey Herd, in the Voice Box on the South Bank at 7.30pm.

Ministers' car boot sale to appease MPs

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

The Government's departments in Whitehall risk becoming like a car boot sale after the disclosure that Nicholas Winterton, the outspoken Tory MP for Macclesfield, forced the Transport Minister, to reprice an £8 million road in his constituency.

With the Government's majority reduced to one, Mr Winterton, a maverick backbencher, in effect held the Government in ransom before the vote on the Budget.

The Department of Transport yesterday confirmed Mr Winterton had put the improvements on the A523 between Macclesfield and Poynton back into the roads programme after heavy lobbying by the MP.

Having secured his road, Mr Winterton happily voted with the Government. But two Tory MPs are on the warpath over their local hospital.

The Department of Health will face renewed pressure tomorrow in a Commons debate for the rescue of the casualty unit at Edgware Hospital by Sir John Gorst and Hugh Dykes, the two MPs who caused a fuss over the threatened closure of the hospital in the summer.

Mr Gorst privately made it clear he

Backbencher wins by-pass after threat before Budget vote

would be prepared to vote against the Government if something was not done about his constituency case, and he was furious when it leaked out.

Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, was engaged in heavy negotiations with the MPs and announced in the summer that there would be a 24-hour casualty unit, there would be GP supervision instead of nurses, there would be maternity provision and provision of beds for the elderly.

But MPs reported that Mr Gorst was engaged in a heated conversation with Mr Dorrell during a division on the Budget.

One ministerial source said: "He doesn't want to lose this hospital. He wants to retain a full acute hospital. Whether he is still angry about it, and will cause trouble to the Government, we will have to see."

The junior health minister, John Horam, is due to answer the debate but last night the Government had no plans to improve its offer.

Judging by the success of Mr Winterton, it can only be a matter of time.

Labour campaigns spokesman, Brian Wilson, said the Government was now vulnerable to any backbencher who chooses to apply blackmail.

John Major's majority could be wiped out by the Barnsley East by-election next Thursday.

Tory MPs could be lining up with the shopping list of constituency demands.

But the most pressing case is for the Ulster Unionists, on whose support Mr Major will have to depend to ensure the Government survives until a general election next May.

There are three big items on their shopping list: no surrender to the IRA in the peace talks in Ulster; urgent action on the electricity interconnector between Scotland and Northern Ireland, which has been delayed by Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Secretary, after recommending it should go under ground in Scotland; and the lifting of the ban on beef exports from Northern Ireland, which Mr Forsyth also has been blocking.

But MPs reported that Mr Gorst was engaged in a heated conversation with Mr Dorrell during a division on the Budget.



Lone voice: A demonstrator at the Department of Trade and Industry in Westminster yesterday, highlighting the granting of export licences for arms to Indonesia on the 21st anniversary of its invasion of East Timor

Photograph: PA

Euro-budget hit by losses through fraud

Christian Wolmar
Westminster Correspondent

The European Community's £47bn annual spending is becoming increasingly vulnerable to losses through fraud, an all-party group of MPs said yesterday.

In a report which will be welcomed by Eurosceptic MPs, the Public Accounts Committee argues that existing measures to combat fraud, particularly from funds paid to farmers through the Common Agriculture Policy, are inadequate because the procedures are too complex and unworkable.

The MPs found that CAP payments, which cost £32.5bn during the current year, are governed by more than 3,000 regulations, and the Court of Auditors, which oversees European Union expenditure, "had major difficulties in ensuring eligibility through inspections of final recipients. Not only [were the payments] difficult to audit effectively, but the scale of operations across the Community and the complexity of the regulations made it particularly vulnerable to fraud and abuse."

Indeed, estimated losses as a result of irregularities from CAP payments increased from £7m in 1992 to £20m in 1994. The MPs call for "simplification and structural reform" of the CAP.

Payments under structural

funds – such as the social fund and the regional development fund – amount to £20bn per year and the Court of Auditors told MPs that around 5 per cent of the grant payments made to 31,000 separate projects contained "technical faults", averaging about 30 per cent of the value of the grants.

Another major source of fraud is the loss of VAT payable to the European Community, one of its major sources of income. The MPs say that VAT and customs duty on imports are payable only in the country of final destination but because of inadequate information systems and the general complexities of goods in transit crossing several national borders, an estimated £542m is lost annually.

The MPs are also bemused by the fact that the precise amount of the UK's net contribution to EU funds of around £1bn is not known because different figures are given by the Treasury and the Court of Auditors. The court thinks that this is because of the use of different financial years and the non-inclusion in the Treasury figures of amounts paid by the private sector. The MPs say that it should be possible to reconcile these differences and welcome moves by the Treasury and the court to do so.

■ Committee of Public Accounts, *The Audit of European Community Transactions*, The Stationery Office, £5.10.

Discipline code for Labour MPs

Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

Labour MPs could be disciplined for consistently criticising their party leaders under a new code of conduct which was approved yesterday.

The code, which creates a new offence of bringing the party into disrepute, was accepted by 86 votes to 27 despite protests from several left-wingers. It also asks members to attend Parliament regularly, to refrain from personal attacks on colleagues and to act "harmfully" with party policy.

However, the party's leadership accepted an amendment which said it would not be used to "to stifle democratic debate on policy matters or weaken the spirit of tolerance and respect referred to in Clause IV of the Labour Party constitution".

Last night Tony Blair, the Labour leader, insisted that the move was not meant to prevent free and open discussion.

"What it is about is showing we are a serious professional and disciplined organisation. Everyone understands that if you are serious about governing the country well you have to be professional and disciplined. You only have to look at to-

day's Tories to understand that. They are a classic example of how a country should not be run," he said.

One senior Labour MP recently attacked Tony Blair in the left-wing *Tribune* newspaper under the byline "Cassandra". And three MPs who recently put their names in a petition organised by the Socialist Workers Party, which condemned any attempt to weaken Labour's links with the trade unions, were not disciplined.

If Labour decided that one of its MPs had stepped out of line under the code, which comes into force in January, a vote of all its members would be taken before they were suspended from the parliamentary party.

A number of left-wingers were unhappy with the outcome last night. Dennis Canavan, MP for Falkirk West, said he had voted against the code. "It is wide open to subjective interpretation. I don't think it should have any place in a democratic socialist party," he said.

Ken Livingstone, MP for Brent East, also objected to the new code. "I think it is unbelievably crass to say we have to support the party even if it is wrong," he said.

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international

After the blast: Travellers are warned to be vigilant as intelligence source links gas-canister attack to Islamic extremists.

1,000 extra police guard Paris targets

Mary Dejevsky
Paris

Paris was on high alert yesterday as anti-terrorist measures, familiar from last summer, came into force after the rush-hour bomb explosion on Tuesday at Port Royal station. An additional 1,000 police and gendarmes were drafted in to patrol potential targets and 700 troops were placed at the city's disposal.

Two people were killed in the explosion and nearly 100 more were injured.

The most overt security was at stations and tourist sites such as the Eiffel Tower and the Louvre precinct, where gendarmes and CRS riot police patrolled in pairs. Security announcements were made through the day at underground stations, where passengers were handed small blue and white cards headed "Vigilant, together".

The impression was of a more discreet, but also more discriminating, security presence than last summer, and of a French public quietly returning to well-rehearsed routines.

In such circumstances it seemed almost superfluous for a government spokesman to call for "calm and sang-froid". But ministers revelled in the opportunity to call for national solidarity with the government to combat terrorism and they had the gratifying spectacle of trade unions cancelling planned protests because of the attack.

Outside Paris, security was

increased in Bordeaux, where the Prime Minister, Alain Juppé, is mayor, and in Lyons, which was a target during last summer's bomb campaign. Suburban housing estates known to have large concentrations of first- and second-generation north African immigrants and active Islamic groups were

newsletter from September and a separate tip-off that a commando unit was about to enter France from Italy after training in the Middle East.

The type of bomb – a 13kg gas canister filled with explosives and 10cm nails which was said by experts to have caused as much damage as a grenade – and the timing and location of the attack had immediately recalled last year's campaign by Algerian Islamic terrorists.

Despite these parallels, the foreign ministry spokesman, Jacques Rummelhardt, said that there was so far "nothing to link the attack with the situation in Algeria... we are still at the stage of hypotheses". Some observers connected the bomb with last weekend's referendum in Algeria which had supported a new constitution outlawing religious parties.

Others noted, however, that France's first big terrorist trial of recent years is due to open in Paris on Monday. The case concerns the bombing of a hotel in Marrakesh in Morocco in 1994.

Two French citizens of north African origin are in prison in Morocco after being convicted of the attack, but the inquiry also uncovered a recruiting network based in France.

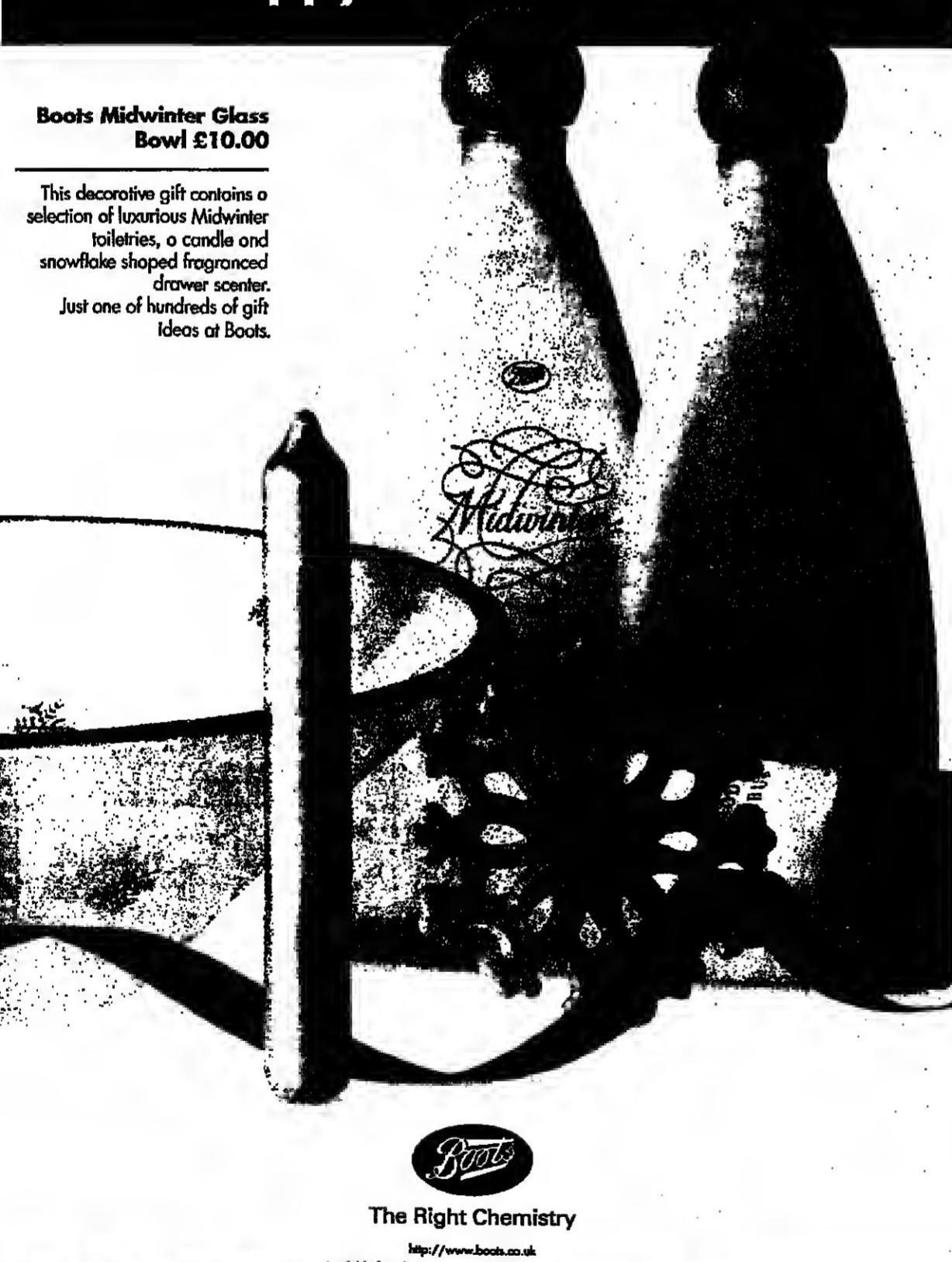
The case provided the first evidence of Islamic fundamentalist recruitment on French housing estates – a pattern repeatedly uncovered during the investigation into last year's bombs in France.

They cited an Islamic

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Security alert: French soldiers patrolling Eurostar trains near the Gare du Nord

Photograph: AFP

Chirac struggles to revive lost influence in Africa

Mary Dejevsky

It may have seemed that President Jacques Chirac, who flew out of Paris yesterday to reach Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso in time for the inaugural dinner of the Franco-African summit, was exchanging one trouble spot for another. From a capital braced for further terrorist attacks, he was arriving at an assembly of leaders from more than 50 African countries, several of which, notably Zaire and the Central African Republic, face the prospect of much worse disorder.

The summit was likely to be overshadowed, however, by a question that has been raised recently to France's great dis-

pleasure. Is France as the ex-colonial power still able to propose and dispose in its traditional zones of influence?

Two developments have placed the question on the agenda. The first was its failure, despite a concerted diplomatic effort and statements about the "biggest humanitarian crisis ever", to muster an international force to intervene in the Rwanda-Zaire border area. Half the crisis seemed to be solved when several hundred thousand Rwandan refugees walked back to their home country. By this week, the 10,000-strong force proposed had been reduced to plans for a food and medicine parachute drop in eastern Zaire. Even that may not happen.

The second development was no easier for France to swallow: the public vanishing of its weakness by the United States. The US Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, had already infuriated France by challenging its "monopoly" on relations with some African countries. But the knife was turned last week by the US ambassador to Zaire, who gave a briefing to local journalists that then appeared verbatim in a Kinshasa newspaper. The ambassador, Daniel Stimpson, was quoted as saying that France was "no longer capable of imposing its will in Africa" and that it continued to support " decadent regimes". The Cold War is over and it is no longer a matter of supporting a dictator,

just because they are pro-Western," he said. French officials extracted an apology, but the damage was done. In fact, the sentiments attributed to the ambassador have been voiced by French specialists on Africa.

To counter the notion that his country protects corrupt dictators, Mr Chirac will argue in Ouagadougou for "good governance" in Africa, representing a shift from the emphasis on patronage towards a British-style model of aid tied to economic efficiency and political soundness. The message could be undermined, though, by the refuge accorded by France to President Mobutu of Zaire, who is convalescing on the Riviera from a cancer operation.

Stronger lira casts a cloud over sunny side of the Alps

The dash for the euro is bringing gloom to South Tyrol. Sarah Helm reports



There are many people here who are not happy about trying to force Italy into the EMU first wave," said Mr Seebacher. "And I don't believe we will make it."

The conventional wisdom says that, given the chaos of its national politics, Italy has become wholeheartedly pro-European.

As a founder member of the community, the government of Romano Prodi, the Prime Minister, believes Italy has a right to membership of EMU from the start.

Nervousness about the strengthening lira is evident throughout South Tyrol.

At the parliament of the provincial government, in Bolzano, deputies met last week in solemn mood. They were discussing whether they could raise new taxes to run their beautiful, quasi-city-state, in the manner to which the citizens have become accustomed.

Tyrol is untypical of Italy; the area was part of Austria-Hungary until the end of the First World War. The concerns here do, however, reflect many ordinary Italian misgivings about the euro, magnified by proximity to the frontier. South Tyrol is in many respects very pro-European, being in the prosperous north. The vine-draped mountains, and the constant aroma of fresh coffee normally heightens the feel-good factor here. Bolzano is "on the sunny side of the Alps".

But the region's economy is heavily reliant on tourism, with 70 per cent of visitors coming from Germany. A downturn has already been noticed this year as the lira has strengthened.

The region's native German-speaking population has a strong historical interest in cementing ties with Austria and Bavaria, seeing European integration as a way to blur state boundaries. The South Tyrolese have won autonomy from Rome, as well as large subsidies.

However, precisely because South Tyrol has prospered under its autonomous government it resents what it sees as a "political" diktat from Rome over belt-tightening for the sim-

gle currency. Those driving the euro bandwagon in Bonn and Paris score countries who engage in "competitive devaluation". But in Bolzano the freedom to weaken the lira is seen as a valuable tool. It has meant a mini-boom for South Tyrol. Some here fear that anger over Mr Prodi's cuts, to prepare Italy for the euro, could upset the fragile local political balance between the dominant German speakers and the minority Italian parties.

New economic hardship is likely to hit South Tyrol's less privileged ethnic Italians first, and extreme right Italian nationalists politicians here are exploiting popular discontent.

"People hate the Euro-tax. They are angry that a reduction in employment and cuts in state social spending is the price we are having to pay for the euro," said Luigi Schiatti, of the post-Fascist Unitalsia political party.

The South Tyrolean value their regional identity, and this makes them doubly nervous about Brussels-style European integration. There is fear about the "harmonisation" of cultures that the introduction of the euro could bring. "Integration is a word we don't like very much," says Richard Seebacher. "People are afraid it means they will lose their identity."

• Milos cool a jam

• Bosnia enemies round

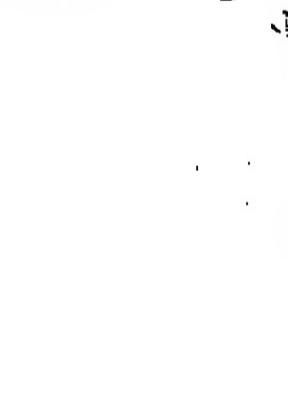
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Milan (Reuter) - Milan's city council plans to crack down on prostitution by photographing clients' cars and sending them to the owners' homes with traffic tickets.

If this is the will of the city

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Bonn's top spy defies critics

Imre Karacs
Bonn

Number 008 did not look comfortable in his unaccustomed role as public servant. Standing before the German parliament to answer questions about a mission gone wrong, Bernd Schmidbauer, controller of secret services concentrated on damage limitation.

Mrs Werner Mauss, the "private agent" arrested in Colombia last month for paying ransom to kidnappers, had not acted under orders. Yes, it was true he had met Mr Mauss six times in three months, and knew of his "humanitarian mission". Chancellor Helmut Kohl, in whose office Mr Schmidbauer - codename 008 - works, was aware of the Mauss escapade only in "general terms".

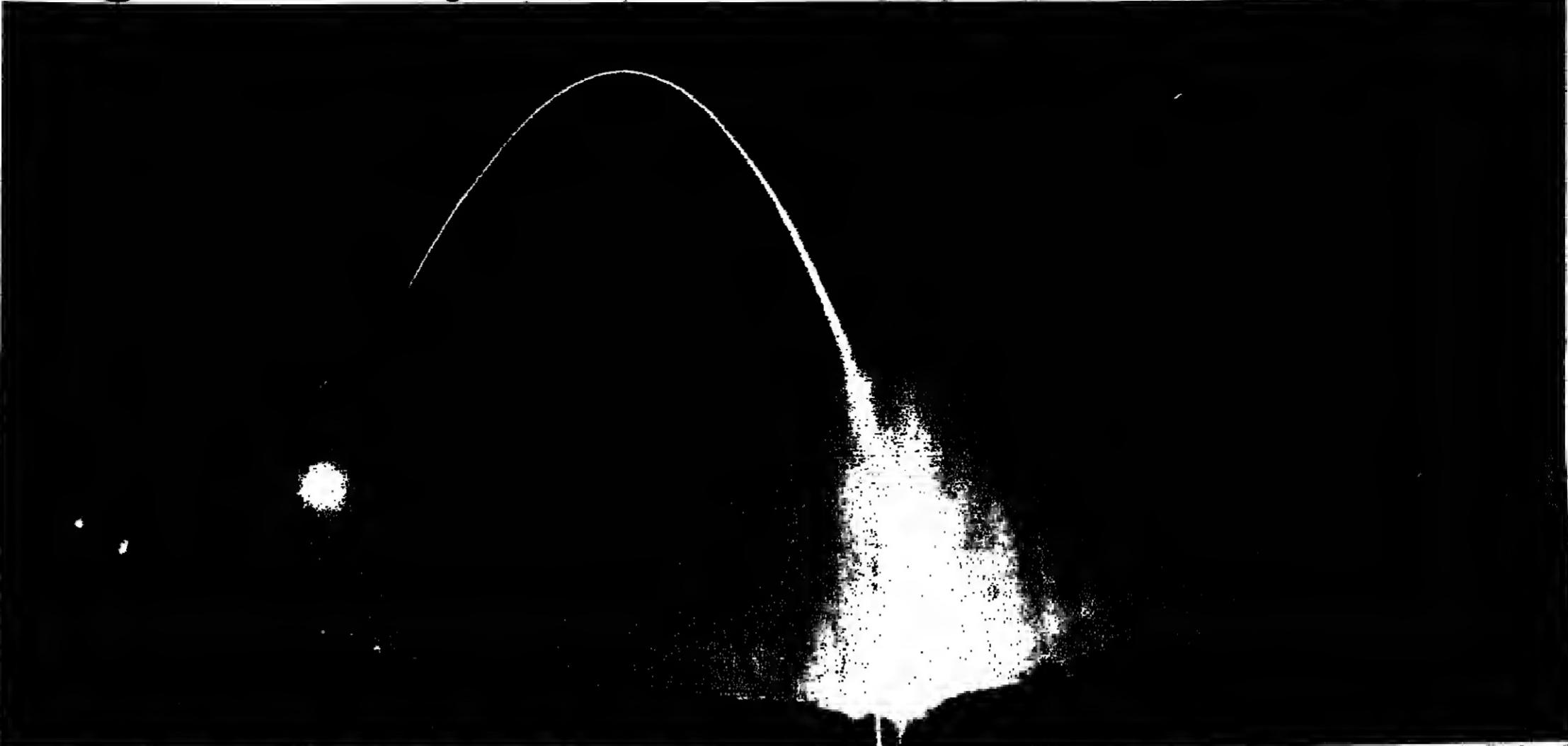
Apart from that, the government knew nothing of Mr Mauss's activities. It had merely issued two German passports to "Mr and Mrs Müller", which were then handed over to Mr and Mrs Mauss, together with a letter from the consulate in Bogota certifying that the bidders were on official business. The gun the agent was carrying as he was apprehended in Medellin on 17 November was apparently his own, as was the satellite phone and four forged passports.

Mr Mauss had been paid by German companies to negotiate the release of senior staff kidnapped in Colombia. On his last outing, he was about to fly the wife of a BASF executive out of the country, having just bought her freedom for a sum in the region of \$2m. Paying ransom is a crime in Colombia, as is travelling with false papers - the charges upon which he was indicted yesterday.

The affair has provoked opposition calls for Mr Schmidbauer's resignation. But the man who once ordered plutonium to be smuggled into Germany will not be dislodged by the capture of just one of his private army.

"I expect no gratitude," he told MPs, "but nor do I expect to be judged."

Signs in the sky mark another mission to the red planet



Trail-blazer: A time-exposure photograph shows a Delta rocket lifting off from Cape Canaveral, Florida, yesterday, carrying a NASA Mars Pathfinder probe

Photograph: Mike Brown/PA

Chechens welcome their Robin Hood

Phil Reeves meets the aspiring president, Moscow's bête noire

Grozny - Shamil Basayev and his entourages had no sooner clambered out of his dusty Nissan Patrol than he was quoting his version of Churchill with all the fluency of a man who had spent a lifetime on the stump.

Perhaps we could remember Churchill's three rules about Russia, said the Chechen commander, who now - to the horror of his enemies in Moscow - wants to be president of the self-proclaimed Caucasus republic. "First, don't believe the Russians. Secondly, never make friends with the Russians, and thirdly, never let a Russian into your cowshed."

Six months ago such rhetoric

was only to be expected from Mr Basayev, 31, the most uncompromising of the Chechen separatist leaders, whose exploits in the war made him a latter-day Robin Hood for many of his countrymen but a terrorist in the eyes of Russia.

Diplomacy was never his style. His CV includes robbing banks, hijacking, storming a fortress city (Grozny) and - his most notorious exploit - rounding up 1,000 hostages in Budennovsk, Russia, last year.

But the 21-month Chechen

capitulation to Chechen demands to secede. This indignation will be greater still when they contemplate his election manifesto; the priority of the man who was for so long Russia's most wanted terrorist will be to fight crime.

It is an issue that has begun to matter after a war that was itself a monstrous crime, claiming 100,000 lives. Fighters, still in uniform, race down the highway in BMWs without number plates, yet the euphoria brought by the spoils of success has given way to distrust and resentment.

"They have all become so arrogant," said an academic who used to support the former separatist leader Dzhokhar Du-

dayev. "Before, they seemed such idealists. Now it's everyone for himself. They say, 'We fought for independence for two years. Now we want our salaries'. So they take them." The worst manifestation of this is kidnappings, often by Chechens seeking to settle wartime scores by demanding ransoms of \$50,000 (£33,000) or more. Although some of those who worked with the previous Moscow-backed regime are in the coalition government, many are not; some are too frightened to leave their homes for fear of abduction. "Savagery," said Mr Basayev. "We have to fight these types of offences with all our might."

But what about his own mass kidnapping in Budennovsk, in which more than 100 Russians died? His eyes shudder. "It was my fate. It helped force a peace settlement. Look at what we have now, and ... then. An end to the genocide of the Chechen people. A troop pull-out. A solution to our problems at the negotiating table."

He has a point. A year, even six months ago, few would have foreseen that he would have been outlining his presidential

ambitions to journalists in the centre of Grozny, in the courtyard, no less, of the building that used to house his sworn enemies, the Russian Federal Security Services.

Over the road stood the building occupied by the silk-suited courtiers of Doku Zavgayev, the Russians' ousted puppet leader, now in Moscow. The Chechen seizure of Grozny left it a wreck, ornamented only by warnings about mines and a scrawled remark: "Born wolves [the Chechen national emblem] cannot be made to bark like lapdogs."

Such rhetoric will become the campaign theme of the Mr Basayev, whose poster adorns many Chechen homes and is on display at Grozny's railway station. His rivals in next month's elections are older men who have shown willingness to co-operate with Russia: the leader of the coalition government, Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, and the Prime Minister, Aslan Maskhadov. They played key roles in the talks that led to a deal to postpone a decision on Chechnya's status for five years, troop withdrawal and as yet unclear commitments over economic co-operation, notably oil.

But Mr Basayev remained mostly aloof, defiant even. The most interesting suggestion that Moscow would be unable to accept him as president produces a sneer. "Of course it will be hard for them to work with me. I will not let them rob Chechnya. I will make sure all agreements ... are, first and foremost, in the interests of Chechens." Fighting talk, the sort that will cause many to rally to his cause. The sort also to make Russia wonder what on earth it has done.



Basayev: Branded a terrorist

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Clerics keep watch for the hour of death

Algiers — There were 36 monks and nuns at the Mass, most of them French, grey- or white-haired, listening beneath the stained-glass windows to their priest's reading from St Matthew, Chapter 25, verse 13, his words echoing through the little chapel in the Algiers suburb of Hydra.

"Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh." No one moved on the hard wooden seats. Beside the altar, the bespectacled figure of Monseigneur Henri Teissier, Archbishop of Algiers, sat like a statue in his white and purple robes, in every sense of the word, the silence was deadly.

They had come here, these brave 36, to remember one of France's first religious martyrs in Algeria, Vicomte Charles de Foucauld, the French soldier-turned-priest assassinated by an Islamist at Tamarrasset in 1916. His murder set an awful precedent for the monks and nuns who still refuse to leave the land who call home. Of the 118 foreigners murdered here, 19 were priests or sisters of the Christian church. The French government long ago told the 8,000 remaining French citizens in Algeria to leave, but you have to admire the courage of the 300 or so clerics - from Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East as well as France - who refused.

"I'm not afraid for me, but for our community," the Archbishop says later - a 67-year-old French professor of Arabic who took Algerian nationality after independence.

"You can imagine what I feel every time I hear the phone ring late at night or when I've left my number while visiting a friend's

Lord" - and it is finished ... ourselves are not in the same union as we were before this issue. When you begin celebrating the Eucharist, you cannot help remembering that Jesus was murdered by human violence and in the name of religion. How we have to understand the issue in this society, that we are walking in the footsteps of Jesus. We cannot look at the cross or Jesus as we have done before. Before, it was an abstract thing. Now it is a daily reality."

The Archbishop insists that his church, having long abandoned the idea of conversion, is now a church for Muslims. "We have become more and more the church of the Muslim people. The Algerians are Muslims, but we are their church. We pray for them to try to help them."

The seven monks at Tibhirine opened their doors to all who needed help or medical aid, be they the poor of the mountains, even the GIA itself. "Islamists" are blamed for the deaths of most of the priests and nuns but no one is certain who killed the Bishop of Oran, Mgr Pierre Claverie, on 1 August this year, the day he met the French foreign minister, Hervé de Charette.

Mgr Claverie, who was Bishop of Oran for nine years, believes Claverie was targeted much earlier. "The bomb went off in the street. He was attacked by the door of the church and his brains were found on the floor. It was absurd, idiotic, unconscionable." Just for a moment, there is a hint of anger in the Archbishop's voice. He was in France the night Claverie was killed, with the family of one of the dead monks of Tibhirine, knowing neither the day nor the hour.

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Arafat's men try to hush up jail death

Patrick Cockburn
Jericho

At midnight, Palestinian special police came to the house of Suhailah Fityani in Jericho and told her that her son was dead. A few hours before, Rashid Fityani, held without trial for nearly two years in the local prison, where he was repeatedly tortured, had been killed by a guard during a scuffle.

At first, the police story was that Fityani, 26, had tried to escape. Later, a police official said he was working outside his cell when he got into an argument, which turned into a fist fight, and finally a guard, whom he had beaten up, shot him dead.

It did not seem very likely. Fityani was the second member of a group of six men from Jericho, one of the Palestinian autonomous areas, to die in the town's central prison after they

45, and four other men. The Preventive Security believed they were Israeli collaborators involved in the killing of an Islamic militant in a refugee camp outside Jericho. In testimony published by Amnesty, Fityani, told his family he and Jalaylah were tortured in the same room for three days.

Both were allegedly given electric shocks and beaten with cables. Their flesh was pinched with pliers. They were given nothing to eat or drink for three days, at the end of which Jalaylah died. His body was taken to Jericho hospital; his family saw he was bruised but no autopsy report was published. Fityani was given half a cup of tea and a bowl of porridge a week after being arrested.

The police in Jericho did not show much confidence that their story of how Fityani died would stand up to much investigation. Issam Jalaita, the guard who shot the prisoner, either in self-defence or as he tried to escape, according to officials, had been arrested and was in jail. At the hospital there was an armed police guard preventing anybody seeing the Fityani's body and another outside the house of his mother, Suhailah. He refused to let anybody enter, citing "orders", though he refused to say from whom. A member of Preventive Security told journalists gathering outside the house that "the family does not want to talk to you. Please leave".

At this point, a window in the green door behind the Preventive Security man flew open and Suhailah Fityani, a diminutive woman of about 60, in traditional Palestinian embroidered dress, shouted: "Why won't you let me talk to the press? My son was in a jail without trial for two years and then they killed him." As a security man forced Mrs Fityani away from the door she screamed: "Get your hand off me or I'll break it. I want to talk."

More police arrived and tried unsuccessfully to disperse the small crowd of journalists. After half an hour the green door was opened again, this time by a Preventive Security agent, who smirked as he ushered forward Mrs Fityani. In a chastened voice she said: "I want you all to go away. Nothing you do can give me back my son. He died a supporter of Abu Amar [Yasser Arafat]."

Both were ...
beaten with
cables. Their
flesh was
pinched
with pliers.

were arrested on the same day last year, accused of collaborating with Israel.

His death confirms the reputation of the Palestinian Authority, led by Yasser Arafat, for ill-treating prisoners held by its 11 different police and security forces. At least nine other people have died as a result of torture in the past two years, according to an Amnesty report this week. "It is terrible, a dark day for Palestinian society and fully confirming what Amnesty says about systematic torture," said Bassem Eid, of the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group, yesterday.

Fityani differs from the other 2,000 Palestinians arrested and held without trial by the Palestinian Authority in that the last two years of his life can be fully documented. He was arrested early on 15 January 1995 by men from the Preventive Security Service, the largest Palestinian secret-police agency.

Detained with him was his brother-in-law, Salman Jalaylah,



Gay weddings land Hawaii in a storm

David Usborne
New York

A ruling by a court in Hawaii that bars the state from denying marriage licences to homosexuals is promising a new tourist boom to the Pacific islands, while reigniting intense political debate across the United States over the civil rights of gays and the definition of marriage.

In his long-awaited ruling delivered late on Tuesday, Circuit Judge Kevin Chang found the state of Hawaii was in violation of sexual discrimination provisions in its own constitution by withholding marriage licences from lesbians and gays.

Judge Chang ruled the state had failed to demonstrate a "compelling interest" as to why gays ought not be allowed to marry. The state had attempted to argue that allowing gay marriage in Hawaii might harm the welfare of any children homosexual couples tried to raise.

The decision is a milestone for supporters of gay marriage and for the three homosexual couples who first introduced the case five years ago. One of the plaintiffs, Nina Baehr, told reporters: "People told us we would never get this far in the courts, but when we heard the news there were tears in my eyes. I thought I would cry if we lost, but we cried for winning".

For conservative critics, it will provide a fresh rallying-cry for renewed efforts to block what they see as a conspiracy by gay activists to subvert marriage. Robert Knight of the Family Research Council called the ruling an "outrage".

The holding of gay marriages in Hawaii may be delayed, however, as the state considers appealing to the State Supreme Court. Such an appeal, which is highly likely, could take most of next year to complete.

It is doubtful that the Supreme Court, which gave a

provisional ruling in favour of gay marriage in the same case in 1993, would overturn Tuesday's ruling. In that case, it is probable that Hawaii would finally begin to issue marriage licences to gays and lesbians before the end of next year.

For Hawaii, it is likely to mean a flood of gays to the islands seeking to realise their dreams of marriage.

The political and legal battle that is already under way is focused on the implications of the ruling for the rest of the Union. In theory, the "full faith and credit" provisions of the US Constitution obliges every state to recognise the laws of others.

Last September, however, President Bill Clinton, with the election looming, signed the "Defence of Marriage Act" that invites states to refuse to recognise gay couples and serves to deny gay financial benefits extended to heterosexual married couples.

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The Economist

obituaries / gazette

Sir Claude Hayes

Claude Hayes was a distinguished civil servant whose ended in 1971 in a blaze of adverse publicity as the Crown Agents for Overseas Governments and Administrations, of which he was Chairman, plunged towards a bankruptcy only averted by a massive injection of government funds.

Hayes, the son of a Sussex village carpenter, confounded local belief in the 1920s by gaining scholarship after scholarship to advance him from village primary via Ardingly College to a First at St Edmund Hall, Oxford, followed by a fellowship at the Sorbonne. He returned to Oxford in 1938 briefly as a tutor at New College, before being called up on the outbreak of the Second World War.

Commissioned into the Royal Army Service Corps, he saw service in France with the British Expeditionary Force, and thereafter in North Africa, Sicily, Italy and North-West Europe; from 1942 to 1945 as Lieutenant-Colonel, with a mention in dispatches.

On demobilisation he joined the Civil Service Commission, becoming Director of Examinations and Commissioner in 1949. He transferred to the Treasury in 1957, ultimately as Under-Secretary responsible for Overseas Expenditure, with particular reference to the emergence of major colonies to independence.

By this time Hayes, always an avid traveller, had seen a great deal of the world. Army service apart, he had secured two travelling scholarships or fellowships pre-war, and in 1953-54 a Nuffield Foundation Fellowship had enabled him to tour widely throughout the Commonwealth. His appointment as financial adviser to R.A. Butler, on the break-up of the Central African Federation and Rhodesian independence, added yet further to the overseas background from which then on governed his career.

In 1964-65 the Wilson government established the Ministry of Overseas Development – an innovation viewed with some apprehension by the Treasury and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, for two reasons: first because each foresaw some encroachment on its



Hayes: omnivorous error

own preserves and second, because they had qualms about the formidable pairing of the new Minister and Permanent Secretary – Barbara Castle and the late Sir Andrew Cohen. They, as they were known, a blend of political exuberance and intellectual impatience that might upset the established order. They deemed it essential that a strong, scrupulous, no-nonsense Principal Finance Officer be added to the duo, and in Hayes they had by background and character the ideal choice.

So it proved. The frenetic Cohen and laconic Hayes worked well together. New initiatives in the management of the aid programme, conceived at the top then anchored to reality by

a body corporate nor part of the Civil Service. Lawyers described it as "an emanation of the Crown". The Minister of Overseas Development appointed the Chairman but had no control over his activities. Nor, indeed, had anyone else. The Chairman was however generally responsible to the Minister for the efficient running of this office.

The staff numbered some 1,600 with headquarters in London and offices abroad. They operated through seven directorates and 10 departments, reflecting the diversity of their work – basically the supply of goods and services to the colonies. With the advent of colonial independence, that base had to be broadened if the Crown Agents were to survive, and to that end the Finance Directorate had set out in 1967 to offer a wider range of financial services, including own-account activities embracing merchant banking operations, equity participations and property ownership. In none of these fields was any member of the staff involved an expert.

Hayes was offered and accepted the chairmanship. He knew something of the Crown Agents' work, as liaison officer between them and the Ministry, and from his travels. He was aware of the burgeoning own-account activities but not of their extent. He sensed a need for the recruitment of a senior figure from the City to head the Directorate, citing his own lack of relevant knowledge and experience. However, he accepted assurances about the calibre of the director *in situ* – until it was far too late.

By the end of 1970, the Finance Directorate, living dangerously, was in effect operating as a high-risk bank, with over £400m wrapped up in loans and properties worldwide. Then came the crash. By 1974, with most loans worthless and the property market in tatters, the Crown Agents faced bankruptcy.

The Government stepped in, provided a rescue package of £175m and commissioned an inquiry into the causes of this huge disaster. The resultant report, 200 pages long and two years in the making, reads today like some preview of the collapse of Barings' bank. For a widely critical assessment of what went

wrong, the commission identified rogue traders in the Finance Directorate as central to the debacle, their lack of expertise and firm control contributory factors. The commission added a rider to the effect that what went wrong was a part only of the Crown Agents' activities, themselves only part of their total business, otherwise well conducted through a devoted and loyal staff. It was the actions of just a few individuals that had brought catastrophe for all.

But Hayes sought no excuses. He publicly acknowledged his responsibility for all actions of the Crown Agents and refused to shift the blame for financial disaster. This was the year that saw his retirement.

Hayes the official was not always an easy colleague, always a combative opponent. Strong-willed, quick-thinking, a touch autocratic, he was never other than fair, straightforward and supportive of his staff. Herein, paradoxically, lay perhaps both his strength and his weakness: for once assured of a subordinate's loyalty and integrity he gave his trust, and expected like return. But such assurance is self-assessed, and in the case of the Finance Directorate, proved wholly misplaced. And the price of his error was calamitous.

Hayes in private was a generous, unassuming, dryly humorous man, deeply devoted to his family, his home and his garden. The pride of his retiring years was his listed medieval hall home, Prinkham, in Kent, which he and his wife had meticulously restored and furnished throughout a decade. Their joint talents were great; so was this achievement.

William Bell

Claude James Hayes, civil servant, West Hoathly, Sussex 23 March 1912; Deputy Director of Examinations Civil Service Commission 1945-49; Director and Commissioner 1949-57; Assistant Secretary HM Treasury 1957-64; Under-Secretary 1964-65; Principal Finance Officer, Ministry of Overseas Development 1965-68; Chairman, Crown Agents for Overseas Governments and Administrations 1968-74; CMG 1969, KCMG 1974; married 1940 Joan (died 1984; two sons, one daughter); died 20 November 1996.

Dr Hugh L'Etang

Because Hugh L'Etang was such a modest, understated individual, it would be easy to underestimate his contribution to medical publishing. He was the editor of the *Practitioner* from 1973 to 1982, a monthly journal for General Practitioners. The *Practitioner* was at the height of its success, and for much of the time was the only GP journal doctors would subscribe to. For a further eight years L'Etang was consultant editor of the *Physician* and from 1986 to this year editor of *Travel Medicine International*.

L'Etang was encouraged to enter medicine by his father. But he was a doctor who preferred to observe rather than to practise, and he did it with a glint in his eyes. He was the best medical copy editor I have ever encountered – precise and totally accurate. He wrote many acclaimed books. He was interested in the effect illness had on world leaders and this resulted in titles including *The Pathology of Leadership* (1969), *Fits to Lead?* (1980) and *Ailing Leaders in Power 1914-94* (1995).

Although L'Etang was in many respects the quintessential English gentleman, his roots lay outside Britain. His father, Joseph L'Etang, came from Mauritius in the early 1900s to study medicine and stayed on to become a family doctor in London, where he met Frances Maa, whose family was involved in the tobacco business, and they married in 1915.

L'Etang was educated at Hailbury, and won a scholarship to read Physiology at St John's College, Oxford. He completed his training at St Bartholomew's Hospital, for whom he also played rugby. During the Second World War he served with the Royal Army Medical Corps, and was twice mentioned in dispatches. After joining his father in general practice, he was a medical officer with North Thames Gas Board, and then with British European Airways. He became head of the medical department at the pharmaceutical company John Wyeth and Bros in 1958.

L'Etang was a voracious reader, and might have followed a literary career. One of his responsibilities at Wyeth was the

writing of advertising copy. He would visit the company's library to research well-known artists suffering from a condition that one of the company's drugs was attempting to treat. A career in medical publishing seemed attractive and in 1969 L'Etang landed himself a job as assistant editor of the *Practitioner*, becoming editor four years later.

My own debt to L'Etang is enormous. When nearly 12 years ago I set up my own under-capitalised medical publishing company, Mark Allen Publishing, a management buyout from International Thomson Publishing, L'Etang then consultant editor of the *Practitioner*, one of the two medical journals I acquired, told me he would work for me for nothing.

Several months later he approached me again: "Travel Medicine International is up for sale," he said, "and urgently needs a buyer. If you agree to buy it I will work for the publication as editor, free."

Hugh L'Etang's much-loved wife, Cecily Tinker, was a respected doctor in her own right. They were inseparable. She

would accompany Hugh to meetings and help him report them. She was the cornerstone of his life.

Mark Allen

Hugh Joseph Charles James L'Etang, medical practitioner and writer; born 23 November 1917; Medical Adviser, North Thames Gas Board 1948-56; British European Airways 1956-58; Medical Adviser, John Wyeth 1958-69; Assistant and Deputy Editor, the Practitioner 1969-73; Editor 1973-82; Consultant Editor, the Physician 1983-91; married 1951 Cecily Tinker (died 1996; one son, one daughter); died London 25 November 1996.

artists and their picture frames", 1-10pm. Victoria and Albert Museum: Antiques North, "Substitutes for Silver", 2.30pm.

Born: Jennifer Gordon, Afternoon of War (reforming the figure), 1pm.

British Museum: George Hart, Temple of the Egyptian Western Descent, 1.15pm.

Royal Society of Literature: London W2 Sywryd Monod, "The Crash in the Ceiling: sight and vision in Dickens", 7pm.

Janet Edward

A Service of Thanksgiving for the life of Janet Edward will be held on Friday 6 December at 2.30pm in Chichester Cathedral.

Dinners

Speakers: Miss Betty Boothroyd, Speaker of the House of Commons, held a dinner yesterday evening in Speaker's House, London SW1, in honour of a Parliamentary Delegation from Bolivia, led by Mr George Presley, President of the Chamber of Deputies.

Atlantic Council

Mr William D. Rogers, Senior Partner of Arnold and Porter and Vice-Chairman of Kissinger Associates Incorporated, spoke at a forum briefing of the Atlantic Council of the United States, held yesterday evening at Atlantic House, London SW1. His subject was "Challenging Horses: the new Clinton team and foreign policy". Mr Alan Lee Williams was in the chair.

Lectures

National Gallery: The Rev Donald Reeves, "Advent (I): Advent and Christmas", 1pm.

National Portrait Gallery: Jacob Simon, "The Art of the Picture Frame:



Bastin, as Baron Ochs, with Helga Demesch in *Der Rosenkavalier*, 1974. Photograph: Hulton Getty

Barry Prothero

Barry Prothero was a committed fighter for gay liberation and an innovative curator, who helped set up and direct the Angel Row Gallery for Nottinghamshire County Council. After university in his native Australia, Prothero worked in art galleries, which spurred him towards further study at Sydney University, where he specialised in the history of art. A brilliant student, he was awarded a government scholarship to attend the Warburg Institute in London, and in 1971 spent six months in Italy practising the language and studying art at first hand before moving to London.

Excited by London's cultural and political activity, Prothero found the atmosphere of the Warburg too conservative, and transferred to the more liberal Courtauld Institute, though his request to write about David Hockney was turned down on the grounds that "there was nothing to say". Later he threw himself into gay politics, and was an active member of the Gay Activist Alliance, taking part in campaigns to "zap" W.H. Smith's shops for their refusal to sell *Gay News*, and picketing British Home Stores for sacking a gay worker, Tony Whitehead.

In 1980 Prothero became the first gay rights officer at the National Council for Civil Liberties. Here he contributed to publications on employment rights and initiated campaigns to raise the issue of transsexuals, getting the case of April Ashby taken up by the European Court of Human Rights.

He then moved briefly to the Lesbian and Gay Centre, the brainchild of the Greater London Council, before returning to his first love as visual arts officer for Nottingham County Council and moving to Nottingham. Determined that the city should have a gallery devoted to contemporary work, he persuaded the council to set up the elegant and spacious Angel Row Gallery in a prime city centre site. He devised a wide-ranging programme which included work by artists such as Alison Wilding and John Keane, as well as exhibitions of fine crafts. A major success was to commission Helen Chadwick to cast her sculptural pieces *Pax Flowers* (1994) for a spectacular show which subsequently toured to the Serpentine Gallery in London. Prothero's confidence, knowledge and inter-personal skills calmed the anxieties of local councillors about work which carried an element of sensationalism. Among other thought-provoking exhibitions were installations by Susan Trangmar and Duncan Higgins which were visual responses to coal mining, an industry which had dominated the area for nearly 200 years.

Two years ago increasing ill-health led Prothero to take early retirement and he returned to London. Earlier this year his long-time partner, Tim Lunn, died, leaving him bereft. Despite failing health (he died of an AIDS-related illness) he continued to pursue the interests which throughout his life had given him pleasure: notably music, the visual arts and theatre.

Slight in stature, with chiselled features and curly black hair, Barry Prothero brought to his work not only Byronic good looks, but an intellectual rigour, a lively imagination and, most usefully, a wicked wit.

Elizabeth Forbes

Jules Armand Bastin, opera singer; born Pont-L'Évêque, Belgium, 18 March 1933; died London 26 November 1996.

Born: Barry Graeme Prothero, curator; born Perth, Australia 28 May 1945; died London 26 November 1996.

Deceased: Emmanuel Cooper

Obituary: This depended on whether Parliament, in passing the Act, or the Secretary of State, in making the regulations, intended them to confer such a right. Regard must be had to the object and scope of the provisions, the class (if any) intended to be protected by them, and the means of redress open to a member of such a class if the duty was not performed.

The object of the provisions was clearly to expedite prosecutions and protect defendants remanded in custody from languishing there for excessive periods. But while the power conferred on the Secretary of State by section 22 was expressed in very broad terms, there was nothing to suggest that Parliament intended to give him power to create new private law rights of action.

If for any reason the CPS did not perform its duty, a defendant injured by that failure was doubtless expected to apply for release on bail at once, such application being assured of success. It cannot have been intended to confer a private law right of action for damages in such circumstances.

Paul McGrath, Barrister

Ex-prisoner cannot sue prosecution service

LAW REPORT

5 December 1996

An accused person who had been remanded in custody pending trial had no right to sue either the Home Office or the Crown Prosecution Service if they were held in custody beyond the statutory time limit.

The Court of Appeal dismissed an appeal by the plaintiff, Jeanette Ann Olson, against the decision of Barbara Dohmann QC, sitting as a deputy High Court judge on 29 April 1996, to strike out the plaintiff's claim against the Home Office, as the department responsible for prisons, claiming damages for false imprisonment.

She also sued the CPS for damages for breach of its statutory duty, under regulation 6(1), to bring her before the court so that she might be admitted to bail.

Both defendants applied under Order 18, rule 19 of the Rules of the Supreme Court, for the claims to be struck out as disclosing no reasonable cause of action.

Nicholas Blake QC and Tim Owen (Boberts Mackay, Bristol) for the plaintiff; Stephen Richards (Treasury Solicitor) for the defendants.

Lord Bingham CJ said that, following her committal under section 6 of the Magistrates' Courts Act 1980, the plaintiff could have been detained either from the Crown Court or the Divisional Court.

She contended that the last 82 days of this period of detention were unlawful, being in

excess of the time limit of 112 days between committal and arraignment prescribed by regulation 5(3)(a) of the Prosecution of Offences (Custody Time Limits) Regulations 1987, as amended. She sued the Home Office, as the department responsible for prisons, claiming damages for false imprisonment.

She also sued the CPS for damages for breach of its statutory duty, under regulation 6(1), to bring her before the court so that she might be admitted to bail.

Both defendants applied under Order 18, rule 19 of the Rules of the Supreme Court, for the claims to be struck out as disclosing no reasonable cause of action.

Nicholas Blake QC said that, following her committal under section 6 of the Magistrates' Courts Act 1980, the plaintiff could have been detained either from the Crown Court or the Divisional Court.

The issue in relation to the CPS was whether the statutory duty imposed by regulation 6, which it wholly failed to perform, was a public law duty only, or could also give rise to a private law right enforce-

Births, Marriages & Deaths

BIRTHS

HUGHES: On 26 November, in Angels and Mark, a beautiful daughter, Sophie Jane.

DEATHS

RICHIER-PENTNEY: Dr Hugh, husband of Annabel, father of Christopher and Victoria, died on 2 December 1996. Cremation at Westgate Crematorium, London SE27, on Tuesday 10 December at midday. All welcome afterwards. Enquiries to The Funeral Centre, 0181-695 0999. No flowers, but donations to English National Opera Boys Programme.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR GAZETTE **MARRAGES & DEATHS** must be left with the editor at least three weeks in advance. Please add a telephone number if possible. Address: 0171-293 2011 (24-hour answering machine 0171-293 2012) or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at 26.50 a line (VAT extra).

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh can respond to your messages of congratulations. The Duke of Edinburgh, Captain of the Honourable Artillery Company, attended the Festival of Trees, Gala Dinner, National History Museum, London, on Friday 22 November, and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Service, St Paul's, London SW1.

Changing of the Guard The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounted the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 1pm.

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Love thy neighbour is the lesson for Number 10

Memo to Tony Blair: do not let Gordon Brown gain any powerful allies in a Labour cabinet. This week has been an important lesson in the dynamics of modern British government. Kenneth Clarke won a crushing victory over the Prime Minister with the help of Michael Heseltine.

We have seen in the recent past how a Chancellor can overwhelm his next-door neighbour if the occupant of 10 Downing Street allows him to make alliances. Nigel Lawson did it to Margaret Thatcher in 1988, forcing her to declare that the pound would go into the European exchange rate mechanism "when the time is right". He and Sir Geoffrey Howe, the Foreign Secretary, ambushed her before the European summit in Madrid. Then John Major himself did it to her, in 1990, when she finally agreed to join the ERM – against what she thought was her better judgement. That time, Douglas Hurd, the Foreign Secretary, was the Chancellor's leverage partner.

It was Hugh Dalton, Labour's post-war Chancellor, who observed that the more free the traffic through the connecting door between Nos 10 and 11, the happier the government. When relations are poor, the government is weak; conversely, when relations are close and harmonious, governments tend to be strong. Labour would probably not have been able to come through the 1976 IMF crisis if Jim Callaghan and

Denis Healey had not worked well together. Geoffrey Howe's 1981 budget, based on the solid foundation of like minds, was the turning point of Mrs Thatcher's first administration.

Mr Major knows this already, of course, because it was his former ally Norman Lamont who threatened the unity of the Government with his scepticism about the ERM – such that he "sang in the bath" when the pound was bounced out of it. But now the connecting door between Downing Street neighbours seems firmly closed. Mr Major is already on record. His "instincts" are against a single European currency. Mr Clarke, likewise, is on record. There could be benefits in joining the euro and it would be "senseless" to rule it out. So they have worked out a compromise, which is to leave the option open. But it gets harder and harder to fudge a question of such central importance as the date draws nearer to the election – followed less than a year later by the deadline for a decision.

This week, it seems Mr Major wanted to send a signal to the Conservative Party that there was no question of his joining the single currency in the first wave, while keeping the option open in public and thus keeping his Chancellor. Whether someone overdid the whispering in the ear of *The Daily Telegraph*, or whether it was simply a crass and counter-productive idea, we cannot know. But the ferret, instead of flushing

out a rabbit, let loose a pair of wild foxes, in the form of Mr Clarke and Mr Heseltine, who were given the chance bluntly to reassess the compromise position. Mr Major had no choice but to be uncharacteristically emphatic in his answers to the Labour leader in the Commons on Tuesday; his government will not rule out the option of joining the single currency, *not even in the election campaign*. That last bit in italics is important; so important that it might just be top of Labour's list for sentences to quote back at Conservatives when the campaign gets properly underway.

The silence on the Tory benches

marked a significant historical moment. For the Euro-sceptical mainstream, it dawned on them that Mr Major was not going to spring the "not in the next Parliament" surprise which they believe is essential to winning the next election. For the rest, it dawned that the unity on the issue, which they thought had been skilfully and convincingly put together at Bournemouth last month, was not going to last.

There now opens up the appalling prospect of the Tories imitating Labour in the 1983 election, with the party leadership and the membership going to the polls on rival programmes. The

manifesto will keep the option open, but as many as two-thirds of Tory candidates will tell their electors that they would never vote to "abolish the pound". Yesterday, as we report today, it emerged that this Euro-sceptical majority will include ministers who will have to be repudiated just as the election campaign gets under way.

The remarkable thing is that, unlike Labour in 1983, either programme could be popular. The electorate is broadly hostile to the single currency, but it also strongly supports the argument for keeping the option open. Few voters, however, are likely to look favourably on a party which tries to adopt both positions. And the problem for the Tories now is that they cannot help themselves.

Formally, the compromise position will now hold until the election. But with some ministers now describing their outlook as "suicidal", as a result of Tuesday's Prime Minister's Questions, discipline is dangerously close to breaking down. Westminster's corridors are abuzz with post-election Tory leadership talk again – the worst possible sign for the party's electoral optimism. Once again, so soon after an apparently successful party conference in October, we are back to speculating that the Tory party is sliding towards disaster, in the grip of an ideological conflict which it is incapable of resolving while still in power.

Of course, in 1983 the Tories won a

144-seat majority over a divided Labour Party. Mr Blair's new Labour is not going to win a landslide of that size, is it? Most chilling of all for the Tories this week was the ICM poll, which put them on 31 per cent, behind Labour on 30 per cent. That is the polling company – the Tories' own, in fact – which is most cheerful about the Tories' chances. If that were the outcome of the election, Labour would probably win a majority of 190-odd seats. Silly – isn't it?

Old habits dine hard

A survey out today shows a surprisingly high proportion of the population never eats "ethnic" food. The flip-side of the finding is that a large number of people eat a great deal of rogan josh, spaghetti alle vongole or egg-fried rice. Eating habits may seem a trivial form of distinguishing people. But cultural divisions remain deep, separating the old from the young, city dwellers from those who live in the country – and those to whom fenugreek and coriander are essential from those who add only salt and pepper. The survey is a reminder that "internationalisation" has not touched large chunks of British society, at least in that significant part of our social anatomy – the stomach.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We're back on the road to Wigan Pier

Sir: Paul Ashton suggests that malnutrition in Britain today is due more to fecklessness on the part of benefit claimants than to inadequate levels of benefit (letters, 3 December). He goes on to describe a meal produced for less than £1.50 per head.

Such arguments are not new. George Orwell comments on a similar "disgusting public wrangle" about the minimum weekly sum on which a human being could keep alive" in his 1937 essay *The Road to Wigan Pier*.

Income Support/Jobsseeker's Allowance rates are lower than those quoted by Mr Ashton. A single person aged 18 to 24 receives £37.90 each week. An extra £10 is paid to those aged 25 or over.

This weekly allowance is intended to cover the cost of fuel, replacement clothing, furniture and household equipment, toiletries, cleaning materials, transport and leisure items as well as food. Additionally, those people living in private rented accommodation are likely to have to meet a significant shortfall between their rent and their Housing Benefit.

It is also worth noting that many benefit claimants live on large estates or without their own transport. This makes it difficult to use supermarkets – forcing people to use local shops, which often have only a limited range of fresh food while charging higher prices.

Mr Ashton's final suggestion that the problem lies with the misallocation of resources on non-essentials such as tobacco, alcohol and lottery tickets is typical of those who would rather find a victim to blame than address a problem.

MIKE BOLTON
Nottingham

Sir: It might be possible for a family on benefit to cover food bills, but if a child needs new clothes, shoes or school uniform then someone will go hungry that week. And if a major household item such as the cooker or washing machine fails, there is no provision for replacement.

We belong to a Catholic welfare group and we can state that it is not possible to exist long-term on benefit. The charity we work for is contacted weekly by welfare professionals – health visitors and social workers – with requests to provide basic essentials such as clothes, furniture, bedding, fridges, cookers, washing machines and even money for food and heating bills. If the welfare professionals are pushed into reliance on the voluntary sector then there certainly must be huge holes in the welfare net.

WINSTON WALLER
JOANNA WALLER
Whitstable, Kent

Sir: The Government is to reduce Housing Benefit for unemployed people, to encourage such people to find jobs and force them into sharing accommodation ("Budget Special", 27 November). The assumption seems to be that the unemployed are idle layabouts, and that there are lots of jobs just waiting for them.

My son is 36. He overcame the considerable disability of deafness and obtained a good qualification in engineering. He worked for several years in computer-aided design with a firm in the Midlands, but was made redundant when the



Concerns grow over genetically engineered farm animals

Hung parliament is on the cards

Sir: There has been much analysis (27 November and following) on whether the Budget will help the Conservatives to win the general election – or whether the Budget will make no difference and Labour might be still on course to work.

A case can be made that a hung Parliament is statistically the most likely outcome.

The outcome of the 1997 general election was, in terms of seats, as follows: Conservative 336, Labour 271, Others 44. As a result of subsequent boundary changes and an increase in the total number of seats from 651 to 659, and ignoring by-election results (and defections) since 1992, the parties appear to go into 1997 roughly as follows in notional terms: Conservative 340, Labour 275, Others 44; this equates to an overall Conservative majority of over all other parties of 21.

The policy now being announced penalises those who are already suffering from their inability to contribute to the productivity of this country. This is a fundamentally immoral proposition.

Bishop JOHN D DAVIES
Froncysyllte, North Wales

The writer is former Bishop of Shrewsbury

firm had to reduce staff. He has written many hundreds of letters and applications, and has had dozens of interviews. But after four years, he is still unemployed.

This is the kind of person which this policy is going to penalise. The question is asked: "Why should the taxpayer pay for those who don't work? Who pays for unemployment?" The question should be: "Who pays for our much-vaunted increase in productivity?" In our industries we have increased productivity by the simple device of increasing the number of non-productive people, and it is they who are paying.

Our son has lived for about 10 years in a small one-bedroom flat in a Wolverhampton; this is one of his few forms of dignity and independence – it is going to have to give it up under the new policy?

The policy now being announced penalises those who are already suffering from their inability to contribute to the productivity of this country. This is a fundamentally immoral proposition.

Bishop JOHN D DAVIES
Froncysyllte, North Wales

The writer is former Bishop of Shrewsbury

Sir: Paul Ashton clearly believes that the virtuous restraint he exerts over his food budget should be an inspiration to all social security claimants.

Thank goodness I don't have to share the dinner table with him. Such mean-spiritedness in condemning the right of claimants to enjoy a few non-essential items must make him a pretty unapprising dinner companion.

Pass the sick bag.

PAUL RICKARD
Kingsgate, Surrey

Conservatives. Within the model devised above, the following range of results can be deduced:

i) Labour wins 0 to 10 seats, Conservative overall majority; ii) Labour wins 11 to 54 seats, hung parliament; iii) Labour wins 55 to 85 seats: Labour majority up to 60.

It can be seen that the "hung parliament" range, consisting of 11 to 54 seats gained by Labour, represents over half of the potential range of 0 to 85 seats gained by Labour. This does seem to suggest that a hung parliament is rather more likely than the financial markets appear currently to assume.

M C FITZPATRICK
Head of Economics
*Charnley Vellacott
London WC1*

Sir: Your front page article of 2 December suggests that John Major may go to the polls earlier than 1 May, in part because the Ulster Unionists are unhappy with the prospect of a general election on the same day as the local elections here.

This seems rather improbable; our local elections will take place on Wednesday 21 May, so it is rather unlikely that the Westminster elections will coincide with them.

Your correspondent correctly notes that our local elections use proportional representation, but goes on to suggest that this system favours Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party.

In fact the DUP has got fewer

votes in recent local elections than in European elections or last May's Forum elections; and the operation of the Single Transferable Vote clearly favours "centre" parties such as the UUP, the SDLP and the Alliance Party, rather than parties on the extreme. Even in 1981, when the DUP got slightly more votes than the UUP in local elections, they did not win quite as many seats.

NICHOLAS WHYTE
Party Organiser, Alliance Party of Northern Ireland
Belfast

Sir: I was saddened to read Patrick Cockburn's report from the West Bank ("Netanyahu says Palestinian land is empty", 28 November). The report said: "Mr Netanyahu may not be in favour of ethnic cleansing, but his belief that the West Bank is 'empty' will worry Palestinians."

I have just returned from the West Bank where I met the widow of Arafat Amira, the 36-year-old Palestinian referred to in the article who was shot dead by Israeli soldiers for protesting peacefully against the confiscation of his land.

The Palestinians in this community are more than just worried. There is also confusion and fear – why was an unarmed man shot during a non-violent protest at an illegal confiscation?

There is a sense of betrayal – two months ago the Israeli government

promised Arafat they would not take his land but then they moved the fence surrounding the Israeli settlement to include his land. And there is profound shock – Arafat's death was entirely unprovoked and his pregnant widow is now responsible for their seven young children.

The West Bank is far from "empty". The Palestinian communities which live there are being carved up and hemmed in by the Israeli programme of road and settlement building, and restricted from moving freely around. Many Palestinians talk of a state of apartheid, and the sorts of restrictions imposed on families like Arafat's do nothing to counter that view.

ANGELA BURTON
Christian Aid
London SE1

Sir: I was saddened to read Patrick Cockburn's report from the West Bank ("Netanyahu says Palestinian land is empty", 28 November). The report said: "Mr Netanyahu may not be in favour of ethnic cleansing, but his belief that the West Bank is 'empty' will worry Palestinians."

I have just returned from the West Bank where I met the widow of Arafat Amira, the 36-year-old Palestinian referred to in the article who was shot dead by Israeli soldiers for protesting peacefully against the confiscation of his land.

This related Celsius temperatures to day-to-day weather, rather than to the better known but perhaps less useful freezing and boiling points of water, as follows:

Five and ten and twenty-one.
Winter, Spring and Summer sun.
I have always found this a great facility in assimilating Celsius temperatures to discussion of the weather.

ROBERT COOK
London W11

Insult to teenage vegetarians

Sir: Virginia Ironside (Dilemmas, 28 November) is obviously not very in tune with the young people of today if she can only offer such a cynical and ignorant view of our principles.

I could not help but take the article as a personal insult, being a fellow teenage vegetarian and relating as well as I do to Zoe's daughter.

How can Miss Ironside pretend to deduce this girl's deep psychological motives for becoming a vegetarian from a short note penned by her mother?

Even if Miss Ironside were a qualified mind-reader and Zoe's daughter had changed her diet for nothing more than raging hormones, it is an outrage that this should be turned into a generalisation. I dearly hope that your readers do not begrudge their children the right to their beliefs because of these pompous spouting.

I will not grow out of my vegetarianism, because my decision to give up meat was a mature, rational choice. I passionately love animals and gave up many favourite foods and the chance to wear the latest fashions to stick by my opinions.

I plead with Zoe not to take the article seriously. How can you advise your daughter on the advice of someone who says that a growing girl can live on bread and jam?

KATIE COCKER
aged 15
Birmingham

Stone of Wesse

Sir: On a hillside in the village of Kingston Deverill, Wiltshire, is the ancient stone on which the kings of Wessex were anointed and crowned ("Scots get the Scone, but Major wants the jum", 16 November).

As the kings of Wessex (like the Kings of Scotland later) eventually became the kings of England, could not this stone be shaped to fit the Confessor's throne in the Abbey?

ANTHONY E F TROTMAN
Salisbury

Point-scoring

Sir: So the big wigs in Basildon Labour Party say they're going to expel Terry Marsh ("Terry Marsh comes out fighting for the Lib Dems", 30 November)? It says something about the Labour Party's complacency that it takes a former member to stand for another party before they realise he left a year ago.

JUDITH FRYER

*Liberal Democrat Head of Press
House of Commons
London SW1*

Penny dreadful

Sir: The recently announced reduction in the basic rate of income tax has led to a proliferation in the use of the incongruity "one pence" by journalists and broadcasters. Whatever happened to the penny? No less objectionable is "one pence", more redolent of a single act of mirth (popularly known as "spending a penny") than of a unit of currency.

Dr A J HEAD

*Leatherhead,
Surrey*

essay

Very sexy. Big mistake

Supermodels lay bare their feelings against the fur trade, while the EU decides on whether to ban the leghold trap. But the noisy animal welfarists could do more harm than good, argues Richard D North

Millions of women will soon be sighing for the chance to emulate Madonna's wearing of fur, as paraded before them in the movie *Evita*, which opens here after Christmas.

Already, the European fur trade is enjoying a recovery. The economy is out of recession, and – perhaps as important – the world seems tired of being hauled by campaigners.

Many of the fur trade's best customers are sassy young women celebrating their earning power and not easily intimidated. Yet next Monday EU environment ministers will decide whether or not finally to bring into force a ban on the leghold trap, a device which epitomises the fur trade.

If they do, after a year's delay, nearly everyone, from the British Veterinary Association to the animal rights campaigners, and including John Gummer, the Secretary of State for the Environment, will believe they are helping to bring to an end an abuse of animals so gross that only the most hard-hearted could object.

For most animal campaigners, the leghold trap is (as the groups' most recent ad has it) a "hideously cruel device", in which an animal will endure "agonising pain, as it is caught in the vice-like grip of the trap's

jaws". Actually, judging by its effect on a human hand (yes, I've tried it), the moment of impact of a modern leghold trap is not painful, and its grip is firm rather than vice-like.

Still, while some welfarists will concede that a killing trap (one which dispatches quickly and with minimal suffering) could be described as humane, it is unlikely any would accept that a leghold trap might ever be.

But even the welfare issue is not what is commonly thought. Bob Carmichael is not obviously hard-hearted. He is the chief of game and fur management for the wildlife branch of the Manitoba Department of Natural Resources. A wildlife biologist, he is a gentle type, and says of the fur trade: "I feel very good about it. The net effect of buying a fur coat is to reduce animal suffering and to help people."

One often hears native people talk about their relationship with nature, their respect for and even veneration of their prey. What is sure is that it is the best – the more independent, the more feisty – the real moral value in that. With average trapper earnings at about \$1,000 a year, it's being a minority activity of small economic consequence makes it all the more poignant.

But the native trapper is not the whole of the story. His rights have been much promoted by the US and Canadian governments, but do not to the degree one might suppose actually drive official amities about the proposed ban.

About half of Canada's \$450m fur trade is in farmed fur, and only about 15 per cent of fur sold in Europe is trapped.

The EU regulation under discussion this week is supposed to bring into force from next January a ban on the import of any fur from 13 mostly valuable species, and whether it is trapped or farmed, from countries which have not banned the leghold trap.

But there is a let-out clause, and in recent days it has been the subject of intense international negotiation. The proposed regulation says that countries which can persuade the EU that they have invented and will use a "humane" trap could carry on with the leghold trap.

Welfarists such as John Gummer and almost all the campaigners believe that no leghold trap, however modified, could ever be called humane, and that the let-out clause can't be invoked.

But it looked last week as though the EU might strike a deal in which welfarism and pragmatism would be reconciled. Mr Gummer has already said that provided he is persuaded that there will ultimately be a ban on the leghold trap, and that it happens within a strict timetable, he can accept some delay in its introduction. More to the point, a ban might be agreed on Monday, but not be implemented due to fears of diplomatic pressure from north America on its implications for free trade. In short, European environment ministers may satisfy their constituencies that they argued for virtuous policy, but add that nasty trade ministers scuppered it.

Although campaigners will be angry at any compromise, there is actually much to be said for it. While a humane trap is widely regarded as being oxymoronic, the fur trade and the governments of Canada and, to a lesser extent, the US have invested large sums of money in trying to improve the operation of all traps, including the leghold. They seem to have been quite successful.

Most species of animal – the weasel, mink and marten, for instance – are mostly and best trapped by killing devices which break their victims' necks, or brain them. Improved versions of these traps have been made more widespread. The less fundamentalists of the welfarists accept they cause little suffering. Some traps drown their target – a five- or 10-minute process whose nastiness is obvious – but acceptable to many. It's only for fox, coyote and wolf that the leghold trap is regarded as the best option.

This accords with respectable Canadian research which suggests that stress levels in leghold traps are often quite low.

Mr Sanderson, who trains trappers for the Manitoba Department of Natural Resources (another man who impresses with his ordinary gentleness), remarks:

"I had to use leghold traps when I was asked to move six foxes from a golf course. They were all fine after a day in a trap."

In Louisiana, the state says it must use the leghold to trap the nutria – or coypu – which is wrecking coastal wetlands. It says shooting would not work in the swampy forests, and in any case would rob the hunters of a useful income.

Of course, it is important to consider the degree of suffering caused by legholds.

Alex Sanderson, who trains trappers for the Manitoba Department of Natural Resources (another man who impresses with his ordinary gentleness), remarks:

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<p

the commentators

Now it's your call on Europe, Mr Blair

What a temptation for Tony Blair. On Tuesday, John Major, with all the enthusiastic spontaneity of an RAF Tornado pilot paraded on TV by his Iraqi captors, restated his policy as spelled out by Michael Heseltine: the Government will continue to leave open the issue of monetary union.

Now imagine this: in a few days' time, Blair announces that Labour will not take Britain into a single currency in the first wave – or perhaps even in the next Parliament. *Keween*: There is mayhem in the Tory party. Conservative Central Office foresees Labour's rating among an increasingly Euro-sceptic public breaking all known records. Worse, the grievance of the Euro-sceptics, already incandescent at Major for his refusal to do exactly that, is now compounded by the realisation that if he had taken their advice he would have avoided being humiliatingly outflanked by Blair.

But the Prime Minister still faces a gruesome dilemma. If he decides, as electoral logic now dictates and most of his Cabinet are demanding, to rule out a single currency after all, Clarke (and perhaps Heseltine) will go, wounding pointing out as they do, that Tony Blair is now running Major's European policy. And if he doesn't, his electoral strategy is holed below the waterline – and not just because the Tory party would be torn apart. Instead of tub-thumping British nationalism against wishy-washy Labour pro-Europeanism, the Tories are stuck with being the puny ditherers, against Labour, unfighting defenders of the pound.

This isn't just fiction. In deed, it describes as precisely as possible the political earthquake that would be detonated by a Blair decision to rule out joining EMU at its outset. And there are other reasons why it is tempting. Gordon Brown wouldn't like it any more than Clarke. But Robin Cook, and Jack Straw would welcome it, as would, perhaps, John Prescott and Margaret Beckett. Nor does it conflict that much with the assessment of a number of central bankers, economic commentators and even Treasury officials who frequently cast grave doubt on the wisdom or probability of early British EMU entry. You don't have to be a deep-dyed Euro-sceptic to harbour grave doubts about whether, in the real world, a Labour government would take Britain into a single currency during its first Parliament. It wouldn't even be such an unmanageable U-turn to rule it out. Did not Tony Blair, in his recent speech in Paris, dwell at some length on the potential obstacles?

So why on earth not do it? The diplomatic reason is that it would certainly set back Tony Blair's professed intention of making a fresh start in Europe. Even those national leaders sceptical about whether a Labour Britain would join, would squirm. And anyway, the opinion poll evidence isn't as persuasive as the sceptics suggest. It's true that most polls show



Donald Macintyre

John Major may well have handed Labour's leader the trump card, but can he play it?

convincing majorities against EMU. But it's also, perhaps mysteriously, true that they show equally convincing majorities in favour of maintaining an open mind until the decision has to be taken. Equally disappointed would be those big businesses which may well start beating the drum for EMU once the election is over.

Out would go a lot of Labour's astonishing, but far from baseless, claim to be in sight of replacing the Tories as the party of big business. Finally, Blair may yet want to go in during the next Parliament. After all, if economic arguments – monetary stability, fiscal discipline, lower transaction costs – work at all, they work especially for a Labour Party historically prone in government to market pressure to maintain a credible counter-inflation policy.

These may be persuasive; and they are part of why Blair won't rule EMU out. But they aren't, perhaps, as exciting as the short-term electoral one for ruling it in. So Labour's electoral strategy junkies should consider a further point. Let's suppose that a Blair-led government does after all decide to go into EMU. First it has to get it through Parliament. It's a safe bet that Clarke would, as Roy Jenkins did over EEC entry in 1972, defy a three-line whip in his own party to back Labour. And he might take a significant minority of Conservative MPs with him. Then Labour has to get it through a referendum in which – unlike in 1975 – the main parties will both maintain collective Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet responsibility. Suddenly, the Tory split which has never quite been a split becomes a reality. Suddenly, the possibility of a pro-European, centrist grouping sympathetic to the principal aims of a Blair government becomes a reality. (Even more so if a referendum opts for a version of electoral reform which would sustain a Clarke-led grouping as a new party.) And suddenly a Blair-led administration underpinned by alliances with Liberal Democrats and pro-European Tories starts to look like a very long-term prospect indeed. Fantasy? Perhaps. Impossible? Not quite.

You won't hear a single senior politician contemplate anything like this this side of the election. Moreover, long before this, Blair could face internal dangers of his own. An anti-EMU Shadow Cabinet majority, perhaps led by Robin Cook, would probably be as easy to assemble as a Cabinet one, especially if Blair allowed policy on a single currency to drift through the next Parliament. But there is one big difference: modern Labour politicians divide over EMU on economic and not constitutional grounds. No one, Cook included, has said they object in principle. So it's not just that it's not in the national interest to rule it out now. He is also free to remind Euro-sceptic supporters till he's blue in the face that Labour would only join a single currency if Cabinet, People and Parliament agreed. A triple-lock, which would be enough for John Major, too, if he had a remotely manageable party.

I appear to have acquired a puppy. Don't ask me how. For years I've been ignoring the children's tearful demands for kittens, bunnies, hamsters, goldfish, velociraptors etc, explaining to them that the keeping of pets is a debased form of Victorian anthropomorphism and had no place in a post-Freudian society. They were impressed by this searching analysis, although the five-year-old stamped very hard on my foot shortly afterwards. Then, out of the blue, a friend rang and said, 'I've got this four-week-old labrador cross, would you ... ?' And we said Yes, and that was that.

A terrible mistake. As dogs go, it is a complete non-starter. Now eight weeks old – therefore, in dog-years, an early teenager – she (it's a bitch) believe me) cannot beg, sit up, roll over, fetch sticks, bite postmen or sniff out cocaine stashes. This dog does only three things. 1) It lies on the kitchen floor, as if sapped with a cosh. If you pick it up and put it down again, it subsides onto the floor completely flat, like a sandbag. 2) It bounces in a demurred and uncontrollable fashion, landing its soggy paws on its immaculate Comme Des Garcons strides and chasing the baby – the last fortnight has been one constant re-run of that old Coppertone advert with the

Jenkins did over EEC entry in 1972, defy a three-line whip in his own party to back Labour. And he might take a significant minority of Conservative MPs with him. Then Labour has to get it through a referendum in which – unlike in 1975 – the main parties will both maintain collective Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet responsibility. Suddenly, the Tory split which has never quite been a split becomes a reality. Suddenly, the possibility of a pro-European, centrist grouping sympathetic to the principal aims of a Blair government becomes a reality. (Even more so if a referendum opts for a version of electoral reform which would sustain a Clarke-led grouping as a new party.) And suddenly a Blair-led administration underpinned by alliances with Liberal Democrats and pro-European Tories starts to look like a very long-term prospect indeed. Fantasy? Perhaps. Impossible? Not quite.

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one visits the site of her newspaper lavatory, armed with a redundant fish-slice and bottle of Detox, to find that the pile of ordure which was there two minutes before, has vanished ...

I went to the local library for guidance, but all I could find was *Your First Dog* by Lady Kitty Risso (Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1938). Thunderously-browed, I perused this helpful volume with a stiff single malt and an ounce of Navy shag, and read the words: "I like to think in this little book that I am really talking to you, whether you are a curly-headed little girl as I was or one with short, straight hair, or perhaps a boy who has to leave his dog when he goes back to school ..."

Abandoning this Mifordesque bollocks, I turned to Dr Bruce Fogle, the TV vet, whose book *Gunes Pets Play* gives it to you straight about the nutritious and enzyme-enriched marvellousness of doggy coprophagy. It also tells you in on the far frontier of owner hysteria, like the "Mrs Jones" he once knew who could not bear to be parted from her Chihuahua, even while it was having its rotting teeth removed and rang the recovery room, saying, "I'd like to speak to Susie, I want her to know I haven't abandoned her ..."

But the desire for order in one's life is strong. So I rang the vet and asked how do we make her do this and stop her doing that? And now the animal has her own trainer, whose idea of rigorous canine discipline is to sit around flooring planks of Cap Columbine and saying "Use your right hand more" to the chidren. I mean – I, who has some need of a personal trainer, do not have a personal trainer; but the puppy, who

puppy and the little girl's knickers. And 3) it eats shudderingly revolting things, including bits of the *Financial Times*, the *Thompson Local Directory* (Lambeth area) and spill granules of dishwasher powder. And every so often,

Next she'll be getting stress counselling for the trauma of forgetting where she hid her chew-bone

john walsh

drag queen in the movies of John Waters. The bad guy in *Pocahontas* is a similarly corpulent Brit, a pomaded and Pomeranian-clutching old sweetie. The Wicked Queen in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* is a de-sexed Lady Macbeth, Frollo, the ghoulish cleric who consigns *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* to the bell-tower, may pretend in fancy Esmeralda, but is plainly as queer as Dick's bat-hand. I could go on, but the theory starts to run out of steam when it gets to Captain Hook ...

Nice to have the Eurostar back with us. Is it not? Good to feel that passengers anxious to traverse the Channel Tunnel, even after its small spot of bother two weeks ago, can book their not-perilous-at-all

in my voice, it's because, for the past two weeks, I have watched the Eurostar hurtling along the railway track at the end of my garden, morning and evening, empty of passengers but clearly on its way to something. Finally I rang them. What were the trains being used for? "Oh,

crew training, maintenance ...

While on doggy matters, I note that Glenn Close, the gimlet-eyed actress, has annoyed the American National Centre for Lesbian Rights by portraying the tasty Cruella De Vil, in *101 Dalmatians*, as a predatory dyke. An NCLR person called Kate Kendall deplores the stereotypical lesbian clichés in Ms Close's portrayal, but goes further: "When Disney does portray a villain, there is the tendency to portray that character as other than heterosexual."

And do you know, she's absolutely right? Scar, the villain in *The Lion King*, is played by Jeremy Irons with an effete and preening languor straight from Genet. Madame Medusa, the pawnshop kidnapper in *The Rescuers*, is a theatrical, child-molesting androgynous Ursula, the sea-witch in *The Little Mermaid*, is a vaudevillian hag who twines corrupting tentacles around the virginal Ariel and resembles no one so much as Divine, the bloated

journeys through the northern tunnel, safe in the knowledge that it's only the completely dissimilar southern (un)reality that was damaged by the freight-train fire and that obviously it could never happen again. I have every confidence in the Anglo-French safety authority's "satisfaction" with the new evacuation arrangements in the event of fire or flood, and note that, although their most recent "practice evacuation" took half an hour longer than the time recommended by themselves, it was deemed to be perfectly OK anyway. If you detect a note of concern work, that kind of thing," said an air voice. "We've been running a few in regional services, but without passengers." But look, I said, until the safety review is complete, aren't the crews of the trains in danger? "From what?" he asked. From whatever is being investigated by the Safety Authority, I said. "Look," he said, "as long as we're not carrying passengers, it's perfectly legal." And that's that. The attitude of the safety people throughout this inquiry seems to have been, "Oh, I'll do". I'll stick to Townsend Thoresen for the present, thanks.

A voice that launched 1,000 posters

We catch this performance at a delicate juncture: who can say which way it is going to play? The guy may go up and up and up, until he's a household name like Pavarotti, and people whose musical sights never rose far above Status Quo line up to buy his records; or Roberto Alagna could nose dive to disaster and obscurity.

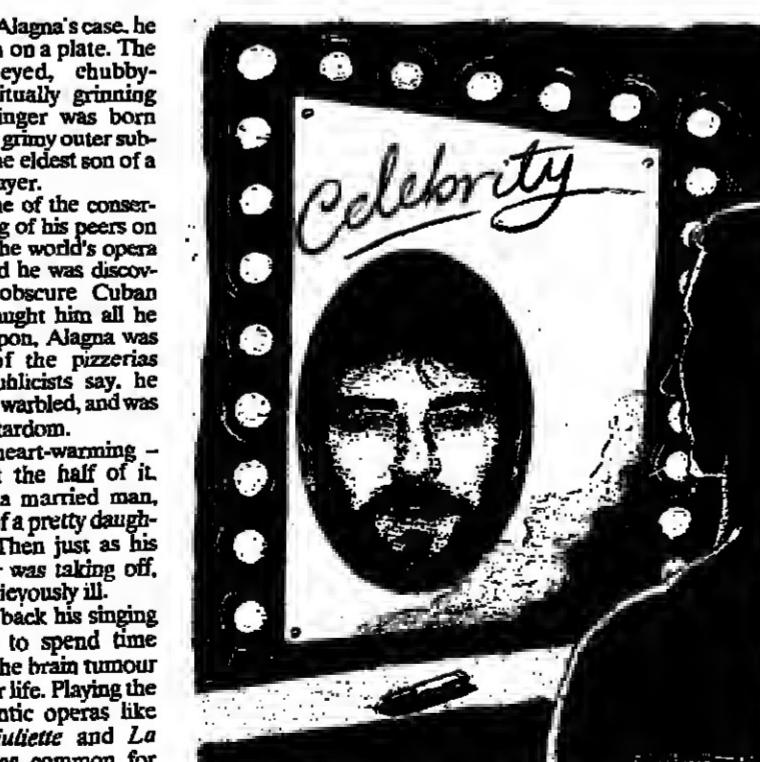
Roberto Alagna, the noontime "Fourth Tenor", mooted successor to Carreras, Domingo and Pavarotti, has got a nice voice, though debate rages as to whether it's more like Pavarotti's or Domingo's or more like a much lighter French tenor. But besides the voice he's got, a fantastic life story.

"The story of Roberto Alagna is the stuff of Hollywood," an EMI publicist enthuses in a new film about the singer due to be shown on Channel 4 early in the new year. "No record company could make it up."

If Alagna vanishes without trace in the next two or three years, it will be his romantic life story he has to blame for encouraging his record company to thrust him too fast and eagerly into the public eye.

Today, "storyline" is the key ingredient in the manufacture of celebrity. "If there is one thing that serves more than any other to involve audiences with celebrities," write the authors of *High Visibility*, an American manual to the art and science of celebrity manufacture, "it is the storyline."

"The conscious design, manipulation and promotion of storylines in celebrities' lives – up to the point of creating realities more dramatic than real life – constitutes the celebrity industry's major breakthrough in the 1970s and 1980s."



The blue-eyed son of a bricklayer is thrust onto the stage. His wife dies tragically, but he finds love again. It's the stuff of opera ... but is it the stuff of opera singers?
By Peter Popham

Before Alagna's debut at the New York Met in April, the bus shelters of Manhattan were plastered with posters of the new sensation. "It was important to create a real image campaign, more like a pop star, to make him more accessible," Gautreau explains. "It was important to let people know he's not only a great tenor, he's a hunk ... Imaging, imaging, imaging, the poster has his very piercing blue eyes staring straight at the camera."

If Alagna was in fact a pop singer, one of this "imaging" would raise an eyebrow. But the application of pop practice to classical music is still relatively new.

The classical music business is extremely competitive," says EMI's Roger Lewis. "It changed dramatically way back in 1990, with the explosion of the Three Tenors, Pavarotti on his own, Nigel Kennedy and Kiri Te Kanawa, and the world opened up to the fact that the potential sales of classical recordings was far greater than had previously been thought."

On their last appearance in Los Angeles, the Three Tenors and their maestro were paid an advance of \$11m. With sums like that, the packaging and selling of a classical music celebrity becomes a more ruthless enterprise than ever before.

The people likely to suffer from this are the singers themselves. The soprano Sally Bradshaw says, "The opera world is littered with dead bodies." She mentions one name: "a massive star 10 years ago, who has sunk without trace. She had a magnificent, really special voice, but now it's in ribbons. The record companies savagely exploit names and personalities, shoving the singers into the hothouse – they produce a few blooms and they're finished."

Good-bye battery



Welcome to the future: Seiko Kinetic®, the first quartz watch that turns your movement into power. Every move you make is converted into electrical impulses by a tiny built-in powerhouse. Ecological, reliable and efficient: wear it one day to gain energy for at least two weeks. Wear it daily – it will run continually. Made of titanium: light, yet strong and kind to your skin. 20 bar water resistant. One-way rotating bezel and screw lock crown. Seiko Kinetic – it's built to last. Someday all watches will be made this way.

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business & city

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Legal threat to domestic power free-for-all

Michael Harrison

Professor Stephen Littlechild, the electricity industry regulator, has been warned that his plans to open up the domestic market to full competition in 1998 are unlawful. The warning is contained in a confidential letter sent last month by lawyers acting for the 12 regional electricity companies (RECs) and the two Scottish power producers.

The letter, written by a partner at the law firm Herbert Smith

and dated 19 November, claims the proposed regulatory framework would prevent electricity suppliers from recovering unpaid bills or disconnecting customers outside their own franchise areas who refuse to pay.

The letter also claims that it would be unlawful to proceed even with the phased introduction of competition for the new system has not been fully completed, tested and implemented by April 1998.

According to Herbert Smith,

the problems thrown up by the proposed changes in the licences that all electricity suppliers will require are such that entirely new primary legislation may be required.

The industry is also lobbying to be allowed to pass on the full costs of preparing for 1998 to their customers, put at between £500m and £1bn. The bulk of the money is investment in the computer systems, software and training needed to allow suppliers to settle accounts through

period should last only six months so that by September 1998 all 23 million domestic electricity customers will be entitled to shop around between suppliers.

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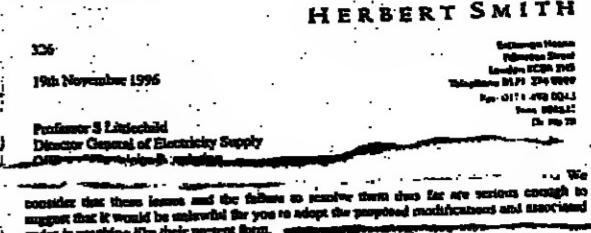
the electricity pool and supply customers outside their existing monopoly franchise areas.

Commenting on the "fundamental legal issues" that have yet to be resolved, the letter says: "We consider that these issues and the failure to resolve them thus far are serious enough to suggest that it would be unlawful for you to adopt the proposed modifications and associated codes in anything like their present form."

If these problems remain unresolved it would "undermine the legal basis of the 1998 project".

The RECs appear to be particularly concerned about how they would recover charges from customers who refused to pay or continued to receive electricity through their local supplier after a contract had expired with a "two-tier supplier" – a supplier other than the local electricity company.

"From their experience in the supply market to date our clients consider that market



participants could suffer significant losses as a result of this problem which would, in turn, be passed on to paying customers in higher prices."

Last night a spokeswoman for Professor Littlechild confirmed he had received the letter and had written back offering a meeting to discuss the concerns raised.

Changing labour market: Shake-out continues at banks and utilities but good times roll in leisure industry

10,000 jobs to go in NatWest branches ...

Jill Treanor
Banking Correspondent

NatWest announced plans yesterday to cut at least 10,000 jobs in its high street banking operation in the next four to five years. This will leave it with just 27,000 high street staff by 2001.

The cuts are a result of the group's plans to build a "new retail bank". They confirm the fears of Bifu, the banking union, which warned of the scale of job losses earlier this year.

Bifu urged NatWest to go back to drawing board over the planned cuts. "By closing branches wholesale NatWest are pulling out of communities. Now they want to take employment away from communities too. We cannot endorse the creation of unemployment ghettos," said Alan Ainsworth, Bifu's chief negotiator at NatWest.

NatWest aims to have just 1,750 branches by 2001, which means the closure of 300 branches. It had 2,805 branches at the start of the decade.

The bank is also moving processing of cheques, now done in branches and at 150 specialist units around the country, to 60 locations. These will operate as telephone call centres and handle account management, cash movement and lending.

Mr Ainsworth said East Anglia would have one centre of between 30 to 60 staff and South Wales one centre with around 100 staff. There are no plans for centres in England north of Bolton, while in the West and South-West of England, the centres will be in Bristol and Plymouth.

The London area will be hit, with most of the operations moving out to the M25.

Tim Jones, managing director, retail banking services at NatWest, said most of the cuts come from "non-customer facing jobs". "There will be opportunities for staff to move to new roles," he said.

The rate of change of job losses was slowing down compared

with the past five years, during which time the bank had shed 30,000 from its workforce with "virtually" no compulsory redundancies, Mr Jones said.

Avoidance of compulsory job losses is the aim again this time, although he said that if they did become compulsory, staff would be warned six months in advance.

"We welcomed the pledge in October of no compulsory redundancies and will continue to contribute to the departure terms," Mr Ainsworth said.

The bank declined to specify how much the job losses and investment would cost, but it is believed it will cost hundreds of millions of pounds.

The project will involve new

technology being installed at the 60 locations. This technology will include a facility which will take a picture of the front and the back of a cheque rather than involve a person inputting information from the cheque into a computer system.

Some of the 60 centres will just deal with this "voucher processing", while others will handle account management, dealing with post, sanctioning loans and debt recovery.

Phone calls to branches will be routed to centres in Bradford, Enfield, Hitchin, Leicester, Liverpool, North West Kent, Menai (North Wales), Plymouth, Solent, Theale and the West Midlands. These will provide a "one stop" service for telephone enquiries.

The financial services marketplace is becoming increasingly competitive and the way our customers want to do business is changing," Mr Jones said.

Midland Bank, which has the First Direct specialist telephone banking service, also routes its customer calls to centralised service centres.

NatWest's announcement coincided with the release of the annual Banking Ombudsman report, which showed a 22 per cent rise in telephone enquiries and complaints.

Jobs losses at the banks	
Already gone	Still to go
Barclays 21,000 (since end 31)	1,000 this year. (Branch automation 9,000?)
Lloyds-TSB 24,000 (since 90)	2,400 in this year. (Lloyds-TSB merger 20,000?)
Midland 9,000 (since 90) (10,000 cut in 80s when others merged)	3,000
Natwest 23,00 since 1990	—
RBS 5,000	On-going
Total job losses in finance	120,000 in six years

... and Southern Water axes 2,000

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

ScottishPower is to almost halve the size of the workforce at Southern Water, the privatised company it bought for £1.7bn earlier this year, through a combination of redundancies and disposals.

More than 700 jobs will go through a voluntary redundancy programme at Southern's main water and sewerage business, while a further 1,340 employees will leave the company after the sale of 14 non-core subsidiaries. The job reductions will be completed by March 1999.

The Worthing-based company currently has 4,450 staff, of which 2,218 work in its 200-regulated businesses.

The sell-offs will raise around £70m, with an extra £30m benefit from property disposals. The cut-backs, which will cost £21m mainly in redundancy pay, will also generate annual pay of £2m.

Mike Kinski, brought in to run Southern after the takeover, gave a damning view of the company's previous board, all of whom have since left. He said too much had been spent on duplicating administrative functions while customer services investment had been neglected.

He advance about the job cuts. He said: "The key issue will be whether or not there is any deterioration in service. We have said in the past we wouldn't want to see companies drive down costs and adversely affect customer service."

ScottishPower yesterday revealed a 31 per cent rise in half-yearly pre-tax profits to £167m. It raised its dividend payout by 19 per cent to 18.5p.

The announcement was preceded by a violent storm which cut off 16,000 Scottish Power electricity customers. By late last night 9,000 homes were still waiting to be reconnected.

The businesses to be sold off include an estate agency chain, a computing company and a vehicle-leasing operation. Though they accounted for more than half Southern's staff, they generated just 14 per cent of the group's sales and 7 per cent of its profits.

Mr Kinski insisted the "vast majority" of the staff involved would keep their jobs when the businesses were sold, and disclosed he had already received several approaches from outside firms.

Dilys Plant, the head of external relations for Ofwat, said Ian Bayt, the water regulator, had been warned in

advance about the job cuts. He said: "The key issue will be whether or not there is any deterioration in service. We have said in the past we wouldn't want to see companies drive down costs and adversely affect customer service."

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New branches of O'Neill's, Bass's Irish themed pubs, are being opened at the rate of more than one a week.

Bass's leisure division will add 1,500 jobs during the year with more bowling alleys and 13 larger bingo clubs set to open.

The creation of 700 jobs was announced yesterday by two car manufacturers – Rover and Honda – and by Moy Park, a poultry processing company in Northern Ireland. Honda is taking on 250 staff to work on the production line at its Swindon factory, where it produces the Civic small car and larger Accord saloon. Honda aims to boost output at Swindon from 100,000 to 150,000 cars a year before 1999. Rover is hiring another 100 specialist engineers at its new £25m design centre at Gaydon near Warwick.

In Northern Ireland, Moy Park will take on 350 staff as part of a £31.5m investment programme that involves the building of a £11m factory in Dungannon, County Tyrone.

First Bus to run Eastern rail line

French government suspends Thomson sale

Michael Harrison

The French privatisation programme was thrown into utter chaos yesterday after the Chirac government suspended the controversial sale of the defence and electronics giant Thomson to a consortium including British Aerospace.

The move was prompted by a wave of public protests that had greeted plans to sell Thomson's consumer electronics business, Thomson Multimedia (TMM), to a Korean conglomerate.

Lagarde, which was chosen as the preferred bidder for Thomson in October, had

planned to dispose of TMM to Daewoo Electronics. That would have left it to share Thomson's defence business with BAe, which was prepared to provide financial support for the Lagarde bid and has already merged its missiles business with Matra, a Lagarde subsidiary.

The move left industrialists, bankers and political observers stupefied, particularly as the French prime minister, Alain Juppe, had defended its choice of buyer for several weeks.

The suspension of the sale comes just days after Mr Juppe's right-wing government gave in to the demands of striking lorry drivers and less than a month after the privatisation of the French bank, CIC was also put off.

The official explanation given at the time was that the bids had not been high enough. But the real reason is thought to have been that there was no acceptable offer by a French bidder, meaning that CIC might have had to be split up and ancillary to foreign buyers.

The French industry minister, Franck Borotra, said the privatisation of Thomson remained essential for the company. But the decision to suspend the process means that Alcatel, which had been tipped

as the most likely winner, may now re-enter the fray.

Alcatel, which had pledged to keep Thomson intact, said it "took note" of the decision. Lagarde said it remained interested in taking over the company. If its bid succeeds, Thomson's missiles and dynamics business, which has sales of £300m-£400m, will be incorporated into the £1bn joint venture formed by Matra and BAe.

Meanwhile there was better news for BAe in the shape of confirmation that it is part of a consortium which has bought the German defence systems

company STN Atlas Elektronik. BAe is paying £104m for a 49 per cent stake in the business, which will give it access to the German naval market.

The deal will come as a small consolation after BAe lost out to GEC in the battle to take over VSEL, which would have given it a naval systems integration capacity.

"This allows us to extend and enhance our expertise and builds on our systems integration expertise and customer base," said a spokesman. The other members of the consortium are the German groups Rheinmetall and Badenwerk.

Williams Holdings, the industrial conglomerate chaired by Sir Nigel Rudd, yesterday cleared the decks for a £500m spending spree after announcing the £360m sale of some of Britain's best-known DIY and building brands.

A management group led by Mike Davies, currently head of Williams' building and security products division, is investing "well over £1m" in a buy-out of a package of 15 companies including household names like Rawlings, the company which invented the eponymous wall plug, to Amdega, builder of Britain's first Victorian conservatory, and including Swiss curtain tracks and Smalbone of Devizes, maker of the up-market kitchens.

The intention is that the new company, to be called Newmond, will float in due course, following in the footsteps of earlier Williams disposals including Pendragon, the motor dealer, Cortworth, an engineering group, and the electronics business sold earlier this year, which intends to float in due course. As with earlier disposals, Williams is retaining an interest in Newmond through a 26 per cent stake.

The deal, which will throw up a £90m profit for Williams and dilute profits by £2m in a full year, comes after two years of

STOCK MARKETS		INTEREST RATES		CURRENCIES	
FTSE 100	4061.50	+23.00	+0.5	4073.10	-3632.30
	4427.60	+12.80	+0.3	4568.60	-4015.30
FTSE 250	2015.40	+10.20	+0.5	2022.10	-1816.80
	2181.29	+1.33	+0.1	2244.36	-1994.95
FTSE All-Share	1886.29	+1.49	+0.5	1994.54	-1791.95
New York	8442.69	-79.01	-1.2	8547.79	-5032.94
Tokyo	20830.56	-44.13	-0.2	22966.80	-19734.70
Hong Kong	13456.26	-61.30	-0.5	13530.95	-10204.67
Frankfurt	2886.96	+28.38	+1.0	2886.96	-2253.30
Source: FT Information. Data as of 3/12/96					

MAIN PRICE CHANGES	
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There's some life left in the old NatWest yet

But for lethargy and the fact that the free market never works as perfectly as it should, it would be possible to write with some authority right now that the main high street banks have essentially had it, that in a fast-changing world these dinosaurs of retail and corporate financial services are going to die out (a bit like discount houses of which more later), becoming little more than fossils embedded in the rocks of history.

As it is, most of them took to evolving sufficiently swiftly (though Lord knows, progress is slow enough) to ensure passage into the next stage of the Darwinian tree. Yesterday's radical set of announcements from NatWest has clearly demonstrated that there's life and determination left in those old bones yet.

What NatWest is doing mirrors what is happening elsewhere in high street banking. With varying degrees of speed, all the main banks are shedding staff and closing branches like topsy. For most of us, the branch network is now a largely redundant infrastructure.

Telephone banking, supermarket banking, and further down the line, internet banking, offer potentially dramatic advances both in terms of customer service and its cost. With the clearers will be under pressure, they stand a good chance of maintaining their present market position.

practices. Indeed, given the present buoyancy of banking profits and the scope for offering much cheaper lines of service, you would expect far more competition from new entrants than is actually proving to be the case. That there is not is partly down to the fact that banking is still essentially a highly regulated oligopoly, and partly because even in today's much more savvy and consumerist world, it remains difficult to dislodge an established banking customer. Changing bank just seems to take more effort than its worth.

Furthermore, the established banks are proving relatively effective in offering the new forms of banking, even if this is not yet reflected in what they charge for it. In other words, the established players are proving quite adept at preserving their supremacy in the new age. That they continue to hold sway depends very much on the speed with which they can reduce costs. This is not without its dangers, as the Banking Ombudsman's report yesterday demonstrated. One of the most common complaints in a growing number of them was about branch closures and not enough people.

The trick, then, is to adapt fast enough to deter new competition, but slowly enough to manage adequately the retreat in traditional banking methods and infrastructure.

On both these fronts, NatWest and others seem for the moment to be doing as well as can reasonably be expected. Though plainly for the taking by new entrants.

As always, however, it is not that easy in

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The received wisdom was that several years after privatisation most of the "fat" had been cut out of the utilities, to the benefit of investors and customers, leaving lean, efficient and clearly focussed operations. Yet Southern Water's apparent obsession with diversification into non-core activities now looks about as strategically focussed as sticking a pin in a page of the telephone directory.

Scottish Power has found savings all over the place. Southern had two separate head offices, one for the PLC and one for the regulated water business, with huge duplication of work. Some 25 staff were employed just to manage cash transactions between the two corporate structures. The same excess seems to exist in other utilities too. In the case of Manweb, the regional electricity company bought by Scottish Power last year, the existing management had already slashed the workforce from 4,415 to 3,581 during their unsuccessful bid defence. Yet a year later Scottish Power had found another 500 jobs to cut.

Price controls have obviously achieved wonders in improving efficiency, but if Southern Water is anything to go by, they have not gone anywhere near far enough. Both regulators and Government should bear this in mind should they feel tempted to block the two outstanding bids for regional electricity companies on the grounds that they would lead to a loss of quoted comparisons.

Bank of England revamps money market dealing

Peter Rodgers
Financial Editor

The Bank of England yesterday announced the biggest reform for more than a century in the way that interest rates are set, marking the end of the privileged position of the City's seven discount houses.

The bank's dealings in the short-term money markets are to be opened early next year to a wide range of banks, building societies and securities firms of UK or continental ownership.

At the same time, gilt repos - debt backed by government bonds - are to become a key part of the bank's daily trading with the market.

The discount houses are specialist banks that have traditionally had a monopoly on daily dealings in bills of exchange with the Bank of England. Trading in the bills is used to control interest rates and signal changes in the cost of borrowing.

The reforms, scheduled for early next year, will restructure London's sterling money markets in line with proposals expected to be adopted for the market in euros when the single currency is in operation.

However, Ian Plenderleith, an executive director of the bank, denied the restructuring in London was prompted by the single currency or the discussions under way at the European Monetary Institute on how to set interest rates after monetary union. "That's not our main motive," he said.

Mr Plenderleith said there were advantages in bringing the UK structure into line with the Continent, whether or not Britain joined the single currency. After the reforms, the London money markets would be "state of the art" and the bond markets would be "absolutely at the forefront" in world terms, Mr Plenderleith said.

He said the driving force for change was rapid evolution in the City, especially the mushrooming growth of the £15bn-a-day gilt repo market, where £60bn of repos are currently in force.

The bank will continue to use the traditional bill market operated by the discount houses. But from next year, changes in interest rates will be signalled by a move in repo rates rather than the traditional method of altering the rates at which the

bank deals in the discount market.

The bank is also abandoning its insistence that gilt-edged market makers are established as separate firms, known as Gennins, and instead will allow them to be merged into their parent groups' balance sheets. Gilt repo dealers will sign a private contract with the bank and there will be no published list.

There are to be changes in the money market dealing timetable during the day and new arrangements for clearing banks that need overnight loans. The discount houses' obligation to underwrite the weekly Treasury bill tender will be dropped.

The discount houses, which are specialist banks, have been given a decade of quiet warnings by the bank that their market will be opened up.

They have already diversified into other financial markets and some have moved into the gilt repo market. Cater Allen, one of the leading houses, said: "We believe we will benefit [from the changes]."

Until the reform, however, the houses have retained their special access to the bank's dealing rooms.

In 1994, the bank further eroded the houses' role by experimentally beginning fortnightly, rather than daily, dealings in gilt repos outside the discount market.

The European Monetary Institute is expected to publish proposals in January for the detailed operations of the money market in euros.

According to the bank's discussion document, the plans being drawn up by the Euro-

pean Monetary Institute are relevant to any further development of the bank's operations whether or not the UK participates in monetary union; the changes proposed in this paper are consistent with the direction and spirit of the proposals currently under discussion at the European Monetary Institute".

There was no comment on the speculation from either carrier yesterday. However, Carla Villalon, spokeswoman for Contineo, gave credence to the belief that exploratory talks were taking place by saying the company would have no announcement concerning a possible merger with Delta until at least the "distant future".

There was a similar flurry of activity in the industry a year ago

FirstBus to run Eastern rail line

Patrick Tooher

FirstBus yesterday won its first outright railway franchise when Britain's biggest local bus company was awarded the right to run the Great Eastern line out of London's Liverpool Street station.

However, FirstBus could run into regulatory problems as it already operates local bus services within the Great Eastern franchise area.

Last night the Office of Fair Trading confirmed it would examine the competition implications of the award. "We will be looking at this in the normal way," said an OFT spokesman.

FirstBus, which also has a 24.5 per cent interest in the Great Western franchise, is promising passengers on the busy commuter line a £5m improvement package. The franchise, lasting seven years and three months, will involve the company refurbishing trains, increasing services, cleaning up stations and raising punctuality targets.

There are also plans to introduce a pilot through-ticketing scheme on buses and trains in Colchester and Chelmsford. However, Trevor Smallwood, FirstBus chairman, refused to rule out job cuts among Great Eastern's 1,400 staff.

FirstBus will receive a subsidy of £29m from taxpayers the first year of the franchise, compared with the £40.6m given to British Rail in 1996-1997. But the annual grant will dwindle to nothing in 2001-2, and by 2003-4 FirstBus will actually be paying the Government's rail franchise office £9.5m.

Rupert Cornwell
Washington

US government statistics may be heavily overstating the country's rate of inflation, and a correction could slash tens of billions of dollars off the country's annual budget deficit and simultaneously boost the chances of a political deal for a balanced federal budget.

According to a report to Congress by an authoritative independent commission yesterday, the Consumer Price Index overstates the real inflation rate by 1.1 percentage points. In other words, US inflation is running at just over 3 per cent a year, but little more than 1.5 per cent. For the public finances, the consequences of such an adjustment would be momentous.

Social security payments, geared to the CPI, would rise less rapidly, as would inflation-linked income tax deductions

and exemptions, meaning that the Treasury's tax take would be higher. Higher receipts and smaller outlays would reduce the federal borrowing requirement.

In all, calculates the commission headed by Michael Boskin, a former chief economic adviser to President Bush, a change in the index could cut the federal deficit by \$60bn (£37bn) by 2002, the target year of both democratic and Republican plans for a balanced budget. On present trends, that year's deficit is put at between \$150bn and \$200bn.

Doubts about the validity of the CPI have long been voiced here by no less than Alan Greenspan, Federal Reserve Board chairman, among others. There is a growing view that the structure of the CPI does not take sufficient account of ever fiercer competition in the economy, and the tendency of con-

Utilities call for higher bills

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

Several privatised utility companies are pressing for "immediate" increases in customers' bills to compensate for surging tax charges announced in last month's Budget.

Ian Russell, finance director of ScottishPower, said yesterday he would be writing to the electricity and water regulators to press for higher bills when the tax changes take effect from next April. The increases for customers would be relatively small, though they would be "in pounds rather than pennies".

The move is likely to embarrass the Government as ministers and utility executives gather today for a DTI conference hailing the achievements of privatisation.

Tax experts have predicted that utility companies, which invest heavily in pipes and cables, will bear the brunt of the mea-

sure. It will raise £45m for the Treasury next year, rising to £675m a year in 1999-2000.

Mr Russell estimated the tax change would ultimately knock £7m off ScottishPower's annual profits. He said: "We are looking and I'm sure every other utility will be looking very hard at recovering the extra tax charge." British Gas also confirmed it would be pressing for softer price cuts for its pipeline business, TransCo, which is the subject of a Monopolies and Mergers Commission inquiry, to compensate. The tax change will cost the company an extra £40m a year by 1999/2000.

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sport

Those who bask in the false light of football's 'new writing' are blind to the fact that a hard game is being played out there

Never mind that idea of a beautiful game, the best advice a young footballer can take on to the field is that no opponent should ever be trusted. I heard it first from a real hard case, a Welsh international everlastingly embarrassed by the disableness once inflicted upon him by a man of quite gentle persuasion.

In moments of deep reflection, which was usually after a pint or two, he would point to a scab just below his right knee and say, "Imagine getting that from a player who probably hadn't kicked anybody before and hasn't since. But the bastard saw his chance, caught me off guard. Take it as a lesson and you are less likely to end up on a stretcher."

Recent incidents make naive the notion that brotherly love is on the

upswing and football is becoming a happier world to live in, with or without banged-up knees, stud-scarred ankles, cracked cheekbones and similar marks of the man of culture.

In their eagerness to pile up knowledge about formations and tactics, many students of football today, especially those who bask in the false light of its "new writing", appear blind to the fact that a hard game is being played out there.

Character, courage and similar goodies are shorthand for relentless aggressiveness, for being a tough competitor. The majority of players, I think, would draw the line at being aggressive to the point of not caring whether they hurt opponents, but in keeping with history some should be approached with the

utmost caution. Versions of "Find out how fast he can limp" are still with us.

Pragmatism prevails in football. There is no future in violent play but the injection of "nastiness" that one Premiership manager speaks of privately as essential to his team's progress gets closer to the truth than most people imagine.

When the greatest of all footballers, Pele, was first introduced to Brazil's national team, its coach, Vicente Feola, warned that he would not always be able to rely on referees for protection and had better start looking out for himself. Pele could never be described as a dirty player and did not chase trouble but opponents provoked him at their peril. Some years later in Rio, when



KEN JONES

established as the game's leading player, he broke the leg of a violent German defender, Szmanisik.

When considering the wickedness that football manages to conceal (even under the close scrutiny of television), it is natural to think of

defenders; defenders make the majority of tackles and therefore commit most of the fouls. Closer examination, however, reveals that an instinct for getting his retaliation in first did not make Pele unique among outstanding attackers.

Shortly before the 1978 World

Cup final between Argentina and the Netherlands in Buenos Aires, I spent an afternoon with Rene van der Kerkhof, who's brother, Willy, was also in the Dutch team. Speaking in fluent English about various aspects of the tournament, he came across as a thoroughly pleasant and mature young man.

Van der Kerkhof could scarcely avoid being angered by the squall of Germanism Argentina employed two days later, taking the field five

minutes late and then objecting to a small, light plaster cast he had worn since damaging his wrist in the opening game. But it was no excuse for the dreadful foul he committed barely 10 minutes after the kick-off, driving his boot into the chest of an Argentinian defender.

Norman Hunter tackled his way into legend for Leeds United but greater peril lay in confrontations with a tiny Scottish international inside-forward, Bobby Collins, and John Giles, who appeared many times in that position for the Republic of Ireland. Making defenders think twice about going for them, theirs was a philosophy echoed by Denis Law, Francis Lee, Mike Summerbee, Allan Clarke, Peter Osgood, Kenny Dalglish and

numerous other leading attackers throughout the world. Scars remind some of Gerson's contemporaries in Brazil that his creative genius concealed alarming viciousness.

Watching football today, British football particularly, you are aware of the danger in innocence. This spring, I think, from inadequate tuition (defensive play generally is poor) and the absence of experienced players from reserve-team football. A renowned tackler in his day, Nobby Stiles maintained that he learned most about the game from playing with and against veterans professionals when turning out in the Central League for Manchester United. A safe bet is that he too was advised not to trust anybody.

Case shut out at Brighton

Football

ANDREW MARTIN

The malaise at Brighton & Hove Albion deepened yesterday when the Nationwide League's bottom club sacked their manager, Jimmy Case.

Unrest of the field has been matched by a dire record on it. Case guided Brighton to only three victories this season and saw his side knocked out of the FA Cup by non-League Sudbury.

Brighton supporters protested again during Tuesday night's 3-2 home defeat to second-from-bottom Darlington, in the latest of a series of demonstrations against the club's board.

They are upset at the sale of the stadium and the club's plans to ground-share with Gillingham next season.

The club's chief executive, David Bellotti, said Brighton would now be advertising for a successor to Case, who had been in charge at Brighton for a year.

Bellotti, speaking on Radio 5 Live, said a number of possible contenders to take Case's place had called the Goldstones Ground offering their services.

Denying it was a job no one would want, he added: "In the last few hours there have been a number of managers who are out of work, who have spoken to me, and who would like to consider coming to Brighton."

The Middlesbrough chairman, Steve Gibson, has made it clear that the unsettled Emerson would not be allowed to leave the club. Gibson said the £4m Brazilian midfielder has been fixed six weeks' salary – around £50,000 – since he joined the club on a four-year contract in the summer.

Gibson said: "The club's po-

sition is clear. Emerson cannot be allowed to leave. If he does, it will cost him his career."

Emerson has not yet informed Boro when he intends to return from Brazil but reports from South America indicate that he has been delayed because his wife, Andrea, is ill.

Jack Charlton, the former Republic of Ireland manager, has rejected an offer to become director of football at First Division Grimsby. The club's chairman, Bill Carr, said that Charlton did not want the "day-to-day pressure of running a club again".

Mike Newell is set to join Bolton from Birmingham City after the clubs agreed a £700,000 fee in time for the former Blackburn striker to be available for the weekend.

Liverpool are ready to sign the Gothenburg striker Andreasson for £2m. The manager, Roy Evans, watched the Swedish international play in the Champions' League last night. The Anfield club have also thwarted an attempt by the England coach, Glenn Hoddle, to add his assistant manager, Doug Livermore, to the national team's coaching staff.

Southampton are to appeal over the sending-off of Ulrich Van Gehel at Blackburn. The Dutch defender was dismissed in a 2-1 defeat for a second bookable offence following a tussle with Chris Sutton.

Rangers are on the hunt of recruiting the Chile striker Sebastian Rozenfeld from Universidad Católica for £3.75m. The 20-year-old is set to leave for Scotland after Chile's World Cup qualifier against Argentina on 15 December.

Robson seeks smarter Boro

As baptisms to the arcane world of football management go, Bryan Robson's must rank as one of the least comfortable. The bright new Riverside Stadium has lost some of its sheen of late as the Middlesbrough team Robson spent £20m to assemble has slumped to a 10-game winless run. With Boro within two points of the relegation places, Captain Marvel has every right to feel distinctly sour.

Yet Robson remains confident that his bewitched squad can turn things around if they show the very qualities – brains allied to brawn – that made the former England and Manchester United dynamo such an outstanding player during his own career on the pitch.

"I can't fault the players' attitudes but they've got to start thinking about the game more," said Robson, who saw his side falter against a determined Leicester on Tuesday night.

"It's not just about putting in effort and commitment. Sometimes you've got to have knowledge of the game, like understanding when you should quicken the pace or slow it down," he said.

"We're going to have to try and remedy that in training and, hopefully, I'll have some of our more experienced players back soon, because experience always helps."

To cap Robson's problems on the field, the distraction of the unsettled Brazilian, Emerson, has been equally irksome off it. The peripatetic midfielder must be acutely aware of the old adage that money does not always buy happiness.



News and all: A training session at Keys Park for Hednesford Town players before Saturday's FA Cup trip to Blackpool

Photograph: Peter Jay

Pitmen primed for upward progress



Who said football folk were one-dimensional? To visit Keys Park, Hednesford Town's home of 18 months, is to be regaled with tales of foreign travel, endangered wildlife, inflammable gas and odorous Italians.

That's not the half of it. The GM Vauxhall Conference club has both managed and co-owned by a self-confessed bawdy who is also Steve Bull's accountant. They play in a stadium built on stilts. So when they visit Blackpool on Saturday – their first appearance in the second round of the FA Cup in a 116-year history – we should perhaps expect the unexpected.

Much of Hednesford's distinctive character stems from their larger-than-life manager, John Baldwin, who gives the lie to the old Monty Python putdown: "I'm an accountant and West Brom may sound, Hednesford finished third last season with the highest points total ever by a promoted club, and are again respectively placed. They have a base support of 1,200 in the former mining community (hence the 'Pitmen' nickname) and plan to upgrade an already impressive complex.

Surely their current level is as high as they can hope for? "If I thought that," said Baldwin, "I'd pack it in now. Unfortunately, people in this town are not as positive or ambitious as me. So many of them told me: 'You'll never win the Beazier Cup.'

Robson was be unsure of when Emerson would finally arrive back in England after going absent for the third time in three weeks, but it is believed the Brazilian is now ready to return after nursing his wife, Andrea, back to health for the Premiership following their third away win of the campaign.

He will be reported, arrive back on Teesside today.

Middlesbrough's other Brazilian, Juninho, is also missing – through an injury to his ankle that will keep him from the playing field for up to three weeks. Juninho's influence this season has been as telling as Emerson's, particularly his link play with Fabrizio Ravanelli.

His loss will be deeply felt as will that of the captain, Nigel Pearson (neck), Steve Vickery (knee) and Alan Moore (hamstring).

Robson said he was unsure of when Emerson would finally arrive back in England after going absent for the third time in three weeks, but it is believed the Brazilian is now ready to return after nursing his wife, Andrea, back to health for the Premiership following their third away win of the campaign.

We've got to show a little bit more fight and character and start to come back when we get behind. We haven't shown that for a long time now," he added.

If Boro required a lesson in how to nurture that single-minded spirit, they need look no further than Leicester, who moved up to 12th in the Premiership following their third away win of the campaign.

Martin O'Neill's team was pieced together at a fraction of the cost of Robson's, and the Middlesbrough manager must be acutely aware of the old adage that money does not always buy happiness.

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Recent incidents make naive the notion that brotherly love is on the

Phil Shaw hears how Hednesford Town are preparing for a Cup challenge

Premier." I said "We will." Then they said: "Even if you do, the ground won't be up to scratch for the Conference." And I said: "It will." Then they said: "Anyway, it won't be ready in time." And I said: "It will."

"Tim a bit of a bully, and I like to get my way, but all this [we are sitting in a pub] has come about through incredibly hard work and a lot of money. Plus

Hednesford have been charged with misconduct by the Football Association over alleged irregularities in a ground improvement grant application, following a complaint made by the Sports Grounds Committee, the funding body administered by the Football Trust. The alleged offence is not thought to be serious.

The fact that I've got the most understanding wife in the world. My business takes 40 hours a week, Hednesford takes 50 hours. I don't think I have been here this week."

His unusual dual role means that the emotions are magnified. "When we play poorly here, I go away wondering about how many people we're going to get to the next week and whether they'll be enough to pay the players. A normal manager doesn't worry about that.

"On the other hand, there can't be any other owner who

gets the same feeling I get when we win... or as depressed as me when we lose."

He believes the Blackpool tie is winnable, despite the fact that Hednesford's only success in knocking out competition came in reaching the Welsh Cup final in 1992. "Don't ask me what a Staffordshire club was doing in that, but we played before 12,000 people at Cardiff Arms Park, which was a catalyst for our success since."

"A Second Division side should beat us nine times out of 10. But I look at Woking at Millwall, or the way we're lost at Wednesford in the first qualifying round even though they're four leagues below us. That's the Cup for you. We're certainly not going there. We're not going to the sea side."

Hednesford's preferred resort is, in fact, Torremolinos. For the past two years, as "a reward and spirit-building exercise", they have taken a mid-season break in the Spanish sunshine. "When we arrived at the hotel pool the youngest couple there were in their late 70s. Suddenly there were these 20 macho blokes jumping around. We had to play a local team to sober the lads up before we flew back."

Talking of news, Hednesford must be unique in having to employ someone to catch them. "We were three-quarters of the way through building a dam to help with sewerage on the site when a council official drove up and said: 'Stop! You can't do any more building.' A ranger has spotted a greater crested newt. "When we asked where, he

pointed into the distance and said: 'There, you're within half a mile of it.' So we've had to pay for a licensed catcher. Has he found any yet?" No, but it still costs us £1,000."

And the gas? Hednesford's ground is built over an old quarry, into which the National Coal Board used to tip waste materials. In order to avoid a potentially dangerous build-up of methane, the stadium is built on a raised platform so that the air can disperse it.

Yet for all their quirks, Hednesford are deadly serious about Saturday, Blackpool will find well-organised opponents with pacy strikers and a useful pedigree: players such as Col Lambert, who helped Macclesfield and Halifax put out League sides in recent seasons, and the former Aston Villa defender Andy Conyn.

Now 28, Conyn spurned the offer of a contract with West Brom last summer so that he could pursue a career in accountancy. The physics graduate now works for Baldwin on and off the park, but looks back fondly on a Villa debut marking John Barnes and a place in the team who beat Internazionale at Villa Park in 1990.

The opposition included Klinsmann, Matthäus, Zenga and Conyn, who was delighted to swap sweat-soaked shirts with Aldo Serena. The only problem, he explained with Baldwin-esque zeal, had been persuading his wife not to ruin its authenticity by washing it. Henceforth, let one call Hednesford boring.

The European body will also announce the venues for this season's European Cup and European Cup-Winners' Cup finals and that the Czech Republic will represent Europe at next year's inaugural Confederations Cup for national teams in Saudi Arabia.

Germany, who should represent UEFA as the reigning European champions after their victory over the Czech Republic at Wembley this summer, have made it clear they will not compete in the tournament during their league season's mid-winter break.

Rotherham United will hear a proposal from the German Football Association that the number of qualification matches for the 2000 European Championships should be cut, leaving more dates available for lucrative international friendlies.

Blades looking sharp

Sheffield United kept up the pressure on the Nationwide League First Division leaders, Bolton Wanderers, by beating their Yorkshire rivals Huddersfield Town 3-1 on Tuesday – thanks to a first-half spell of two goals in four minutes.

Huddersfield drew first blood in the 14th minute when Andy Payton scored his ninth goal of the season, but Howard Kendall's men surged back with strikes from Lee Sandford and Mark Patterson giving them the lead before David White killed off Town shortly after the restart.

The Blades moved up to second after their win, moving above Barnsley, who were held 0-0 by Birmingham at St Andrews. Steve Bruce, described by his manager, Trevor Francis,

as the "fourth-choice penalty-taker", missed from the spot; his effort was saved by the Barnsley goalkeeper David Watson as the home side wasted numerous chances to win the game.

Tranmere looked anything but surrendered tamely 2-0 to Reading at Elm Park. Reading took the lead after 10 minutes when their joint player-manager, Mick Gooding, sent an accurate corner to the edge of the six-yard box, where James Lambert flicked a near header past goalkeeping Eric Nixon.

The Royals secured the points after 33 minutes when Paul Bodin's curling free-kick was met by Stuart Lovell, whose header was helped over the line by Trevor Morley.

Rotherham United's 1-0 home defeat to Stockport means the Millers now prop up the Second Division.

TODAY'S NUMBER

47

The total number of players who have been named to play in the three England A rugby union games against the touring sides of Argentina, South Africa A and Queensland next week.

Pitmen on parade
Hednesford Town pursue
FA Cup glory, page 26

sport

Calling the shots
Ivanisevic cruises through
Agassi all at sea, page 27

Croft gives England some relief at last

Cricket

MARK BALDWIN
reports from Harare
England 197
Mashonaland 279-9

David Houghton, Zimbabwe's veteran player-coach, kept up the pressure on struggling England with a brilliant innings of 110 for Mashonaland in Harare yesterday. However, the spinners Robert Croft and Phil Tufnell produced a dramatic final-hour fightback to finally put some smiles back on the tourists' faces.

The second day of England's opening four-day fixture in Zimbabwe ended with Mashonaland 82 runs ahead on 279 for 9, with Croft's last spell of the day bringing him 4 for 5 in six overs and Tufnell also finishing with four wickets.

An hour after tea, however, after a long slog under a fierce sun at the Harare Sports Club, things looked totally different with Mashonaland on 258 for 3. But Tufnell then held one up just enough to induce a return

catch from Houghton and England's tail was about to bring reward.

Six wickets fell in the space of nine overs, Croft ending the day with figures of 4 for 65 to go with his 80 not out in England's first innings 197.

During the first 50 minutes of play, Croft and Tufnell took their last-wicket stand to 52 after England had resumed on 175 for 9 after Tuesday's embarrassing first day.

Darren Gough then took an early wicket in an impressive new-ball burst before lunch, but during a long afternoon England needed the good fortune of two debatable umpiring decisions just to keep themselves afloat.

Tufnell, who has 4 for 77 overall so far, was the beneficiary of both incidents. First the opener Grant Flower was adjudged lbw for 28 as he swept with his front pad a long way down the pitch and then the Middlesex slow left-arter won an appeal for a catch at slip by Nasser Hussain, after Alistair Campbell had seemed to miss a drive and the ball had

deflected off the pads of the wicketkeeper Alec Stewart.

Campbell, the Mashonaland and Zimbabwe captain, had made 55 from 76 balls and the left-hander walked off in obvious disgust at the decision. Later, however, he said he accepted the umpire's decision even though he was astonished at being given out.

However, England still seemed to be losing control of the match as Houghton was joined by Craig Wishart in a fourth-wicket partnership which eventually realised 116. The 39-year-old Houghton was at times quite majestic, and he reached both his 50 and his century with swept sixes off Tufnell.

Houghton averages 48 from his 18 Tests and it was easy to see why yesterday as he struck 14 boundaries in his 141-ball innings. But then came England's recovery, with Croft, the Glamorgan all-rounder, adding to his already fast-growing reputation with a spell which may yet be a turning point on a pitch which is expected to take more and more spin as it wears.

"All you need in cricket is one wicket and things can change," David Lloyd, the England coach, said after the day's play. "We stuck at it and after a bit of an onslaught both spinners steadied themselves and they then got their reward."

England won toss

ENGLAND - First Innings
(Overnings 175 for 9)

R.H. Croft c D.R. Campbell b Kirby 5
Extras (66 w/o nb) 16
Total (75.1 overs) 197

Fall: 1-24, 2-47, 3-63, 6-88, 7-94, 8-

9-104, 10-115, 11-125

Bowling: Kirby 26.1-4-53-5; B.C. Smart

19.2-2-1; Brent 8.1-20-1; P.A. Smart

16.5-30-0; Matshenzenza 6.0-34-1; Flower

1-2-4.

MASHONALAND - First Innings

G.W. Houghton bv b Tufnell 28

S.V. Carlisle c and b Gough 9

A.D.R. Campbell c Hussain b Tufnell 55

D.L. Houghton c and b Tufnell 110

D.J. Wishart c and b Tufnell 145

P.A. Smart c Cauderay b Croft 8

G.B. Brent lbw b Croft 8

D.R. Campbell not out 2

R.J. Kirby not out 2

Extras (66 w/o) 13

Total (75.1 overs) 273

Fall: 1-22, 2-47, 3-63, 4-238, 5-286, 6-257

7-274, 8-275, 9-275

Bowling: Malibay 12.2-4-24-0; Gough 16.3-

43-1; Croft 10.2-4-6-0; Tufnell 24.6-7-7

4; Brent 21.3-6-5-4.

Umpires: K. Korjev and D. Kalan.

Pakistan owe win to Saqlain's guile

The off-spinner Saqlain Mushtaq claimed 5 for 44 to help Pakistan to an 11-run victory over New Zealand in the opening one-day international in Gujranwala yesterday.

The 20-year-old returned his best figures in limited-overs cricket as the visitors, chasing Pakistan's 228 for 8, were dismissed for 217, two balls short of the 46 overs specified.

Bryan Young was top scorer for the tourists with a fluent 58 off 93 balls containing three fours, while Stephen Fleming and Chris Cairns contributed 36 each and Adam Parore 35.

Young added a second-wicket stand of 78 with Parore after Craig Spearman had gone for six. They took the score to 104

when Parore was leg before Mushtaq Ahmed. Young then lost his middle stump to a fiery Waqar Younis delivery at 117.

Fleming and Cairns added 60 in just 9.4 overs, but Cairns edged a catch to Moin Khan behind the stumps off Younis at 177 and eight runs later Fleming was stumped off Saqlain. The visitors then succumbed to Saqlain and though Chris Harris made a quick 20, it was not enough.

Pakistan, batting first after winning the toss, were helped to a respectable total by half-centuries from Salim Malik and their captain, Wasim Akram.

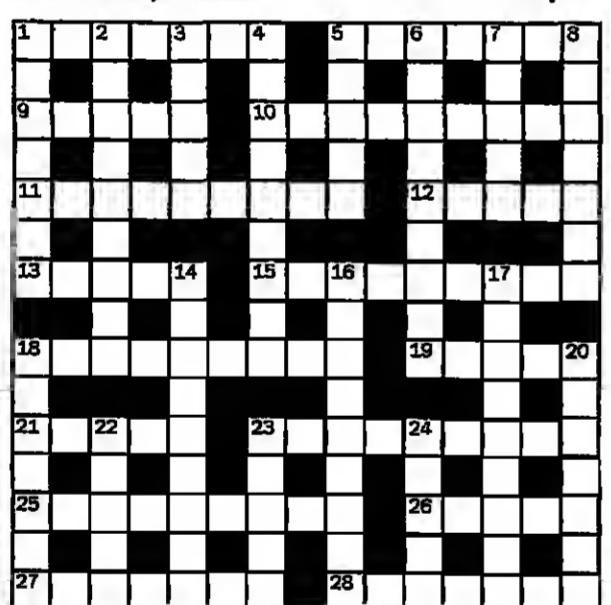
ONE-DAY INTERNATIONAL (Gujranwala)
Pakistan 228 for 8 (56 overs; Salim Malik 52, Wasim Akram 52, Stephen Fleming 36, Chris Cairns 36, Adam Parore 35); New Zealand 217 (45.4 overs; B. Young 58, Saqlain Mushtaq 5-44). Pakistan won by 11 runs.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3162. Thursday 5 December

By Tim

Wednesday's Solution



- ACROSS
1 Sweet that makes part of mouth go into decline (7)
5 Cuts through, taking a brief time in some parts (7)
9 Relative, one not liked initially by a woman (2-3)
10 Arduous experience, running, after taking in thirds of the sporting challenge (9)
11 Outlaw that's removed food, having absorbed scripture? (5,4)
DOWN
1 Rewarding in France (in old France, that is) (7)
2 Just a tiny fraction in factory into working hard (9)
3 Oarsman seeing what we found in rivers (5)
4 Greek character in performing troupe gets lead in Shakespeare (9)
5 Stalwart character, Richard, supporting British (5)

- 6 Outfit's bound to start trading (3, 2, 4)
7 Stop company that's taken over half the capital (5)
8 Connection between cells or pens, say, to be demolished (7)
14 Unexpected candidate proving a nightmare? (4, 5)
16 Writer who gets employment after penning poem? (6)
17 What's unexpectedly not oral, ready found round about part of tooth? (4, 5)
18 Decorates (and bowl) display at rink (5-4)
20 Collapsible enclosure in front of garden (7)
22 Argument over one tree (5)
23 Throw over lady heartlessly and reluctantly (5)
24 Part of stair where man goes up before Queen (5)

With the exception of the 1932 Games in Los Angeles, football has been in the Olympics since 1900, repeatedly running into problems over who should be allowed to play. Fifa closely guarded the exclusivity of the World Cup and refused to let the leading players take part in the Olympics.

Organisers thought they had reached a good compromise in Atlanta when the competition was based on players aged 23 and under, plus three over-age competitors. However, that attracted critics too, culminating with the proposal from within

Fifa set up its own Under-23 World Championship and the IOC (International Olympic Committee) wanted to keep soccer in the Olympics, that could lead to problems," said Keith Cooper, a Fifa spokesman, yesterday. "The IOC can't do it without the approval of Fifa any more than they can stage an archery tournament if the International Archery Federation doesn't want to take part."

With the exception of the 1932 Games in Los Angeles, football has been in the Olympics since 1900, repeatedly running into problems over who should be allowed to play. Fifa closely guarded the exclusivity of the World Cup and refused to let the leading players take part in the Olympics.

"It would be a good idea to have football in the Olympics," said Cooper.

Gilbert Felli, the IOC sports director, said he was aware that some Fifa officials have

talked about taking football

out of the Olympics. "After the Games, they were not happy that they were in Athens and not in Atlanta," Felli said. "There were some comments that

maybe football should go out of the Olympics because it doesn't get enough consideration."

The proposal to start a world under-23 competition may even gain the support of the English, Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland Football Associations, because they are not recognised individually by the IOC and are ineligible for the Olympics.

Even if the championship is approved, the Olympic tournament should remain safe for the 2000 Games in Sydney at least.

The likelihood is Fifa will not go as far as creating a conflicting tournament but will continue to

reject the IOC's plea to allow a completely open Olympic tournament.

"Soccer is the only sport in the Olympics that has this age restriction and some people feel that in some way that is against the spirit of the Olympics," Cooper said.

"Around 1.4m spectators watched the Olympic tournament at all its venues. More people watched the tournament than any other sport in the Games from the financial point

of view. But it would not be wise or in the interests of football for it to be a completely open event, because that effectively means some kind of World Cup every two years."

The United Arab Emirates, the hosts, came from behind yesterday to draw 1-1 with South Korea yesterday in the opening match of the Asian Cup tournament.

Hwang Sun-hong, who scored South Korea's goal, could have settled matters in injury time when, with only the

goalkeeper to beat, he shot just wide of the right post.

Hwang, running on to a

lightful through ball from mid-field, opened the scoring in the ninth minute. He fired a left-foot shot from just inside the penalty area into the bottom corner of the goal.

But as South Korea's domi-

nance began to become emba-

rassing, the UAE hit back

through their striker Khamsi Saad. The Korean central de-

fenders failed to clear an easy

cross, presenting Saad with his chance.

"There's no commitment

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all time and it's an honour for

everyone at Jordan to give him

this run," Jordan said.

Mansell to test for Jordan

Motor racing

A possible Formula One comeback for Nigel Mansell's moved a step closer last night after he accepted an opportunity to test drive a Jordan-Peugeot in Barcelona next week.

Mansell will engage in a two-day test after meeting Eddie Jordan at Silverstone yesterday to discuss the possibility of driving for the team next season.

It was in Barcelona in June last year that Mansell seemingly walked away from the sport for good after retiring his McLaren Mercedes to complete a miserable two-race comeback. Since then, the 43-year-old former world champion has hinted that he might return – but only if the package was right.

"There's no commitment from either party beyond this test. Nigel is Britain's most successful Formula One driver of all time and it's an honour for everyone at Jordan to give him this run," Jordan said.

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